

STARS AND STRIPES[®]

**Chevy Chase
rants against
Bush at event**

Page 13



**Marines sharpen
field communications
skills at Iwakuni**

Page 3



**MLB calls D.C. plan
unacceptable, halts
team promotions**

Page 39

Volume 63, No. 245 © SS 2004 J

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 18, 2004

408224-41581 3-8888888888 01/10/04 10/20/04 11/20/04 12/20/04 01/05/05
ISSN: 0000-0002 01/10/04 10/20/04 11/20/04 12/20/04 01/05/05

50¢

Poll: Japan, U.S. agree on security, not on troops

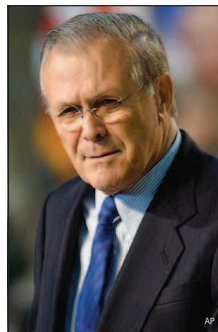
Majority of Japanese want U.S. forces reduced; 59% of Americans disagree Page 8

Escaping into video games Page 7



Spc. Criss Sanders, left, trounces Spc. Robert McKinney and Pfc. David Usry in a video game of Halo in a trailer at Camp Liberty, on the outskirts of Baghdad. Like the teenagers and college students across America who sit on couches late on weekend nights and into the next morning, servicemembers spend free hours on the outskirts of the Iraqi capital killing one another in PlayStation2 and Xbox games such as Halo and Mortal Kombat.

THE WASHINGTON POST/LATWP

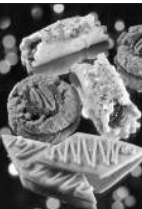


**Rumsfeld to
now personally
sign letters
of condolence
to troops'
families**

Page 6

STARS & STRIPES
Your Hometown NewspaperCOMING
SOON

Scene on Sunday

Up close with
Natalie Portman

Scene on Sunday

Holiday cookies
hit sweet spotDon't miss a
single issue.

For home delivery, call DSN
225-4505 (Japan)
721-7140 (Korea)
645-2010 (Okinawa)

TODAY IN STRIPES

Abby, Annie's Mailbox.....	26
American Roundup.....	20-21
Classified.....	28-30
Comics.....	24-26
Crossword.....	25
Faces.....	17
Horoscope.....	24
Letters.....	22
Opinion.....	23
Sports.....	33-40
TV listings.....	19
Weather.....	27
Your Money.....	18

News Tracker ... What's new with old news

States

Racist vandalism hoax: A former psychology professor at Claremont McKenna College in California was sentenced Wednesday to a year in state prison for spraying her car with racist and anti-Semitic slurs and claiming that unknown vandals had done it. Kerri Dunn, 40, of Redlands, had faced up to three years' imprisonment.

Dunn was arrested after two witnesses told police they saw her vandalize her vehicle and after investigators found inconsistencies in her statements.

Colo. wildfire sentence: A Denver appeals court on Thursday threw out a 12-year state prison sentence given to former forestry worker Terry Lynn Barton for starting the largest wildfire in Colorado history, saying the judge gave her too long a term.

The Colorado Court of Appeals also said state District Judge Edward Colt, who presided over Barton's case, had let "the appearance of prejudice" because smoke from the wildfire forced him to leave his own home for a night.

The court ordered a new sentencing hearing before a new judge.

R.I. nightclub fire: More than half of the 177 clubs in Rhode Island must install sprinklers under the new fire safety code passed in the aftermath of the deadly State night-club fire.

A new statewide survey compiled by the state fire marshal's office says 95 clubs don't meet the new sprinkler requirement, and 55 of those clubs also lack a newly required alarm system that automatically notifies the local fire department when the alarm sounds.

The fire marshal's study, released Wednesday by the governor's office, found that 69 clubs already meet both the sprinkler and alarm requirements.

Robert Blake case: The judge in Robert Blake's Los Angeles murder case Wednesday reversed herself and decided to allow parts of recorded jailhouse conversations to be used at the trial, including one in which Blake referred to the family of his slain wife as "monsters."

Superior Court Judge Darlene Schenpp also permitted use of a segment of a February 2003 jailhouse interview the former "Baretta" television star gave journalist Barbara Walters.

Last week, Schenpp had barred the prosecution from using the material but agreed to listen to the recordings and reconsider.



Tour of Atsugi copters: Lt. Jason Carrillo, a pilot with Helicopter Antisubmarine Squadron Light 51, shows Zama American High School student Matthew Rozko the intricacies of a SH-60B helicopter's control system during a tour to the Atsugi-based squadron. Rozko was part of a group of special education students who toured base facilities as part of a social skills development program.

World

Stolen paintings: One of two paintings by Edvard Munch stolen from an Oslo, Norway, museum earlier this year was seriously damaged, a newspaper reported Thursday.

Citing what it called multiple independent sources familiar with the art world, as well as criminal sources, newspaper Verdens Gang reported that the "Madonna" had been ruined.

In August, three masked robbers, including at least one with a pistol, took "The Scream" and "Madonna" from Oslo's Munch Museum and fled in a stolen car.

Bali bombing trial: A jailed Afghan-trained militant told a court Thursday in Jakarta, Indonesia, that cleric Abu Bakar Bashir became the leader of the Jemaah Islamiyah terror network in 2000, but that he never heard Bashir talk about terrorism.

"I got a telephone call in 2000 that Abu Bakar Bashir was the new amir (leader) of Jemaah Islamiyah," said Imron Bahilaki, who claims that he was in southern Philippines at that time. He said he got the call from a Jemaah Islamiyah operative.

It was doubtful that the statement would be strong enough to support prosecutors' charge that Bashir — as leader of the al-Qaida affiliate — inspired his followers to launch the Oct. 12, 2002, Bali bombings that killed 202 people and last year's attack on the J.W. Marriott hotel in Jakarta, that killed 12.

Afghan child soldiers: Nearly half of Afghanistan's estimated 8,000 child soldiers have been demobilized and are going through educational programs and vocational training aimed at preparing them to rejoin society, the U.N. Children's Fund said Thursday.

The year-old program has targeted 15 northern, northeastern and central provinces. UNICEF said it now hopes to expand into the south, southwest and southeast — the most dangerous parts of a country that is still fighting Taliban and al-Qaida insurgents.

So far, 3,998 boys, mostly ages 14-17, have been demobilized.

Bobby Fischer residency: Iceland has approved a residency permit for Bobby Fischer, embassy officials said Thursday, but the former chess champion faces hurdles in traveling there because he remains in Japanese custody and lacks a valid passport.

Fischer is wanted in the United States on charges of violating international sanctions against Yugoslavia, and has been detained since July 13 in Tokyo where he has been fighting a deportation order to the United States.

Fischer is accused of violating the sanctions when he played a rematch in Yugoslavia in 1992 against longtime rival Spassky. He won and took home \$3.5 million in prize money.

Stories and photo from wire services

STRISES JOB SHOP

Your best source for printing

- Full color magazines
- Training and technical manuals
- Brochures, pamphlets and inserts
- Printing Annual Strategic Plans

Very Competitive Rates
Quick Turn-around
Jobs billed in U.S. dollars, yen, or won.

For more information call
DSN 229-3261 or Comm 03-3404-9447

Your Hometown Newspaper
STARS & STRIPES
circulation@pstrips.osd.mil



Drill connects Iwakuni to 'outside world'

Marines hold communications exercise

BY GREG TYLER

Stars and Stripes

Marines at Iwakuni Marine Corps Air Station, Japan, said they enhanced their skills and learned new ones during the 16-day field communications exercise Capstone '05.

Held at the Penny Lake Field on base, the exercise ran from Nov. 29 through Tuesday. It involved 57 Marines from 7th Communications Battalion and Marine Wing Communication Squadron 18 based out of Okinawa and Marines from communication sections within with Marine Aircraft Group 12, Marine Wing Support Squadron 171 and Marine Aviation Logistics Squadron 12.

Lt. Louis Mejia, Marine Wing Support Squadron 171 communications officer, said the field exercise simulated an environment away from military installations, where units must set up communication links independent of base networks.

"This was a great training opportunity in the MOS (military operations specialty) of these Marines," he said Wednesday.

The Marines ate meals at a nearby mess hall and slept in the barracks each evening but otherwise worked outdoors throughout, as did another group of Marines participating at the same time on Okinawa.

"We trained in establishing network connections to Okinawa via satellite and the Okinawa site connected to the outside world," said Master Sgt. John M. Nightingale, MWSS-171 communications chief. "We all used tactical equipment that would be used in a real operations environment."

He said a complete telephone network and computer networks were created at the Penny Lake site. Communication was established with the Okinawa site via secure satellite connection.

"The training opportunity was so valuable because many of these Marines are young, and this may have been the first time in field training at this level for many of them," Nightingale said Thursday.

Lance Cpl. Gregory Jeter is a field wireman with MWSS-171. His job was to hook up a telephone network on the site by running wiring from switchboards to each communications point.

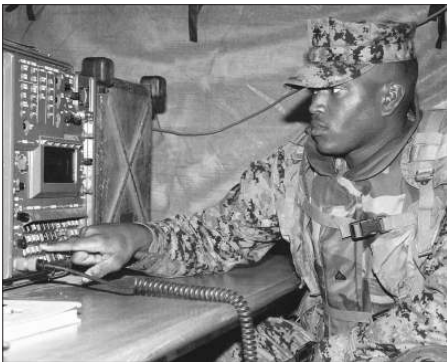
"This was the first time I had done this in such an environment," Jeter said. "I got a lot of training related to my MOS specifically, and the MOS of the people who work the switchboards."

"In the cross-training sense I learned a lot, including how to program the numbers for the individual phones and setting up loops."

Capstone '05 was designed for such hands-on training and to ensure that equipment used in such instances is functional, officials said.

At both the Iwakuni and Okinawa sites, a satellite van was used for the computer connections on the networks.

"We set up a server that is rebuilt to withstand the atmosphere in the field and set those up so you could do pretty much anything there you could in the garrison ... e-mail, surf the Net. ... We took care of things like that," said Lance Cpl. Joshua McElroy of MWSS-171.



LUKAS J. BLOM/Courtesy Iwakuni Marine Corps Air Station

Cpl. Sylvester C. Nickerson, MWSS-171 field wireman, adjusts his tactical switchboard during the Capstone '05 exercise, which ended Tuesday at Iwakuni's Penny Lake Field.

"We built a network wired here on the ground and were on another network to communicate with Okinawa by satellite. They did the same thing down there that we did here," McElroy said.

It was the first time McElroy set up a communication link with a remote site using a satellite.

"For the most part, the stuff I learned was outside my MOS. I learned a pretty good bit about how we communicate with satellites," he said.

"It also gave me an opportunity to teach what I know to some new guys," he added, "which gave me the chance to reinforce what I know by teaching them."

E-mail Greg Tyler at: tylerg@pstripes.osd.mil



Left: Second-graders from Sollars Elementary School sing holiday songs outside the main exchange at Misawa Air Base, Japan, on Thursday. Maestro Elise Henderson, a second-grade teacher at the school, said the students chose songs from different cultures. Right: Julian Salazar hands Col. Corydon Doerr, 35th Dental Squadron commander, a holiday calendar handmade by Cummings Elementary School's Preschool Services for Children with Disabilities. Teacher Louise Warner and her class of 3- to 5-year-olds make about 100 calendars annually to deliver to military commanders and units at Misawa Air Base, Japan.

Merriment at Misawa



PHOTOS BY JENNIFER H. SVAN/Stars and Stripes

Correction

A Friday item about a U.S. Army pilot being registered as a Hiroshima atomic bomb victim should have said the total number of B-24 bombers on a mission to attack Japanese vessels was 33.

Osaka landing fee

Passengers using Osaka Airport in Japan will be charged a special landing fee of approximately 300 yen (\$2.87) per person starting in October, Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transportation officials said Tuesday.

The fee is to be used for anti-noise measures at

the airport, officials said.

The decision was based on a ministry review of the airport's functions and in an effort to support an environment-conscious airport, they said.

The ministry is considering including the fee in prices when passengers buy tickets, officials said.

From staff reports



PHOTOS BY JIM SCHULZ/Stars and Stripes

Above: A Marine CH-46E from Futenma Marine Corps Air Station, Okinawa, flies over the Philippine countryside Tuesday on its way to deliver relief supplies to help victims of severe flooding from recent storms. Left: A Philippine girl walks in a flooded street Tuesday in Infanta, south of Manila, toward a relief center where U.S. troops deliver supplies as part of their mission in the Philippines.

'We are definitely accomplishing our mission'

Marine, AF units prove flexibility as they work in tandem to aid Philippines

By JULIANA GITTLER

Stars and Stripes

CLARK AIR BASE, Philippines — In the span of a few days, more than 600 Marines, sailors and airmen from Okinawa and the USS Fort McHenry from Sasebo Naval Base, Japan, were organized into a joint task force in the vicinity of the Philippines to help the nation carve itself out of a national crisis.

A succession of violent storms and mudslides earlier this month killed hundreds and left thousands homeless or without sustenance.

With roads and bridges out, Philippine military and government forces were stretched thin trying to deliver aid. The United States pledged its support, and soon U.S. helicopters were flying in aid to remote communities.

It was a vivid demonstration of the U.S. military's capability for humanitarian aid in the Pacific region, one of the first of its kind, officials say.

The mission was accelerated by the U.S. military's familiarity with working in the Philippines and by the flexibility of the 3rd Marine Expeditionary Brigade on Okinawa, said the man leading the task force.

"We were able to quickly analyze this mission, quickly deploy for the mission, quickly execute and begin aid runs," said Brig. Gen. Kenneth J. Glueck, commander of Joint Task Force 535 in the Philippines and the 3rd MEB.

Through bilateral exercises

such as Balikatan, "we have basically rehearsed this several times. The whole deployment, the whole setup here at Clark, had been done before," he said.

The MEB itself is designed to adapt to different missions, from humanitarian help to full-scale combat, he said. A core command structure attaches whatever resources are needed and available to make the joint task force.

"When you begin to think and plan for a mission like this you're already thinking from a joint perspective: What capabilities are we deficient in within the MEB that we can draw from the other services?" Glueck said.

Before the final approval came through, an advance team of Marines hit the ground to prepare, followed by helicopters from a Military Sealift Command ship that flew out initial aid.

When the Pentagon officially pledged its support Dec. 7, the ball was set in motion. The USS Fort McHenry from Sasebo carried in two heavy-lift Marine CH-53 helicopters, while six CH-46 helicopters flew in from Okinawa.

Three Air Force HH-60 G Pave Hawks came from Kadena Air Base.

More than 600 servicemembers came along or followed.

"It really did take a lot of parts and integration to put it all together," said Col. John Shook, chief of staff for the joint task force. "It's a lot of moving pieces."

In three days aid was flowing, fueled by a common focus and



Capt. John Naveras, general's aide for Joint Task Force 535, gives an early Christmas present to a Philippine girl in Real. Capping off a week of relief efforts in the Philippines, Marines and sailors with Task Force 535 handed out gifts from the Okinawan Marine Corps Toys for Tots program.

sense of urgency among the participating units, he said.

Each day since arriving, the task force has topped its own success.

"We have consistently increased the amount we have delivered on a daily basis," he said. "I think we are definitely accomplishing our mission."

Joint cooperation

In the sea of Marine digital camouflage uniforms, a few dozen Air Force cammies stand out.

Lt. Col. Billy D. Thompson, commander of the 33rd Rescue Squadron from Kadena, brought the assets of about 50 airmen

from four units to the mix to lead the 33rd Expeditionary Rescue Squadron under the task force.

With barely two days' notice, he assembled the expeditionary squadron from the 33rd and 31st Rescue Squadrons, the 718th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron and pararescue jumpers mostly from the 320th Special Tactics Squadron.

Despite all coming from Okinawa, the Air Force and Marine personnel didn't know each other.

"We don't train together on a regular basis to do humanitarian assistance," he said. "This has worked out really well, on really short notice. Everybody has their role. Everybody stays in their own lane."

The Air Force role is conducting search and rescue in the event an American aircraft goes down, or as needed to assist Philippine forces. The Air Force Pave Hawks, HH-60C helicopters, also transport the task-force commander as needed so Marine aircraft aren't diverted from their relief missions, he said.

On the first day of their air operations, Air Force personnel evacuated four injured Philippine nationals and ferried in 500 pounds of medical equipment and 600 pounds of water to one town.

"The benefit is obvious — you're doing something important," Thompson said. "Especially when you go out there and see the devastation. We're all happy to be anywhere we can help."

Future missions

As the mission winds down, the joint task force has exceeded its goals for delivering aid.

It also sets an example for the U.S. military's potential dealing with future regional humanitarian crises.

"It's really one of those benefits of a forward presence," said Shook, the task force chief of staff. "Standing up task forces is something Pacific Command routinely practices."

"I think it pretty much shows how important it is for us on the mission to maintain that capability in the future," Glueck added, "to be responsive to the needs of our allies."

E-mail: Juliana Gittler at: gittlerj@jstps.com

Saddam has session with a lawyer

BY SLOBODAN LEXIK
The Associated Press

BAGHDAD — Former dictator Saddam Hussein met with a lawyer Thursday for the first time since his capture a year ago, officials said. Insurgents, meanwhile, killed a government official in Baghdad.

Saddam's meeting in his cell with a member of his legal team came as the Iraqi government is gearing up to begin the trials of some of Saddam's top deputies next week, ahead of the country's elections in January.

Saddam and the lawyer, an Iraqi, met for four hours at the undisclosed location where the ousted leader is being detained, said Ziad al-Khassewneh, head of the legal team hired by Saddam's wife.

"He was in good health and his morale was high and very strong," al-Khassewneh said, speaking in Jordan. "He looked much better than his earlier public appearance when he was arraigned a few months ago."

Al-Khassewneh would not identify the lawyer.

Interim Prime Minister Ayad Allawi announced on Tuesday that war crimes trials against Iraq's former Baath Party leaders will begin next week. Saddam would not be among those to appear in court, officials said.

Meanwhile, militants continued their campaign to derail the



U.S. Marines in the back of a Humvee on Thursday join a patrol searching a partially occupied residential neighborhood in Ramadi, Iraq. Iraqi militants in Ramadi say they shot and killed an Italian citizen.

vote by mounting a series of attacks in Baghdad and elsewhere.

Unidentified gunmen shot and killed Qasim Mehawi, deputy head of the Communications Ministry, as he was heading to work, police said. Eight of Mehawi's bodyguards were injured and hospitalized.

In western Baghdad, a roadside bomb exploded near a passing

SUV, badly damaging the vehicle, police said. After the blast, gunmen opened up on the survivors with automatic fire, killing a foreigner and wounding two others, Al-Khadra police commissioner Ali Hussein Al-Hamadani said.

There was no immediate information on their nationality.

In Ramadi, Iraqi militants told journalists they shot dead an Ital-

ian citizen after he tried to break through a highway guerrilla roadblock, reportedly killing one gunman in the process.

An Italian passport and Lebanese residency permit the gunmen displayed identified the man as Salvatore Santoro. A document from the Italian Embassy in Beirut seeking an Iraqi visa for the man called him an aid worker helping Iraqi children.

U.S. deaths in Iraq

The Associated Press

As of Wednesday, at least 1,303 members of the U.S. military have died since the beginning of the Iraq war in March 2003, according to an Associated Press count. At least 1,019 died as a result of hostile action, the Defense Department said.

The figures include three military civilians.

The AP count is five higher than the Defense Department's tally, last updated at 10 a.m. Wednesday.

The British military has reported 22 deaths. Italy has reported 19. Poland, 13; Spain, 11; Ukraine, nine; Bulgaria, seven; Slovakia, three; Estonia, Thailand and the Netherlands, two each. Denmark, El Salvador, Hungary and Latvia have reported one death each.

Since May 1, 2003, when President Bush declared that major combat operations in Iraq had ended, 1,165 U.S. military members have died, according to AP's count. That includes at least 910 deaths resulting from hostile action, according to the military's numbers.

The latest deaths reported by the military:

■ A Marine was killed Tuesday in Anbar province.

■ A soldier died Tuesday from gunshot wounds sustained during a convoy mission south of Baghdad.

The latest identifications reported by the military:

■ Marine Cpl. Michael D. Anderson, 21, Modesto, Calif., killed Tuesday in Anbar province, Iraq; assigned to 3rd Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division, 1st Marine Expeditionary Force, Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, Calif.

■ Marine Lance Cpl. Joshua W. Dickinson, 25, of New Port Richy, killed Sunday in Anbar province, Iraq; assigned to 3rd Battalion, 1st Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division, 1st Marine Expeditionary Force, Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, Calif.

■ Army Sgt. Tina S. Time, 22, Tucson, Ariz., died Monday in a vehicle accident near Cedar, Iraq; assigned to the Army Reserve's 208th Transportation Company, Tucson, Ariz.

Alleged bin Laden tape praises consulate attack

BY MAGGIE MICHAEL
The Associated Press

CAIRO, Egypt — A man identified as Osama bin Laden, speaking on an audiotape posted on an Islamic Web site Thursday, praised an attack earlier this month on a U.S. consulate in Saudi Arabia and criticized the Saudi regime as weak and controlled by the United States.

The voice sounded like the al-Qaida terror chiefs, and the tape, which was more than an hour, was posted on a site known as a clearinghouse for militant Islamic comment. The identity of the voice, however, could not be independently confirmed.

The tape appeared the same day another dissident had called for anti-monarchy protests in the kingdom.

In Washington, Secretary of State Colin Powell said U.S. intelligence officials were analyzing the purported bin Laden tape, but "it appears to be" the voice of the al-Qaida leader.

When asked whether he thought bin Laden was trying to taint the United States and Saudi Arabia, Powell replied, "He's a terrorist. That's what terrorists do. He's a criminal, he's a terrorist, he's a murderer and we're going to continue to hunt for him. ... He will be brought to justice."

The tape's reference to the Dec. 6 attack — in which five militants shot their way into the compound of the U.S. Consulate in Jiddah, Saudi Arabia, killing five non-American employees showed that it was made recently. Four of the attackers were killed and one was wounded in the consulate attack.

"God bless our brothers who stormed the American Consulate in Jiddah," the speaker said. "Those who were killed of our brothers, we ask God to accept them as martyrs." The attack was claimed at the time by al-Qaida's branch in the kingdom.

Also Thursday on the same

Web site, an audiotape surfaced that was purportedly a recording of the sounds of the consulate attack transmitted via the attackers' mobile phones. Sirens, machine gun fire and shouts of "God is Great!" can be heard. At the end, a man recites Quranic verses and then says: "Humiliation for America the infidel and its allies!"

The speaker in the purported bin Laden tape, speaking in calm and even tones, accused Saudi rulers of "violating God's rules," a common theme of bin Laden, who accuses Saudi rulers of being insufficiently Islamic and too close to the "infidel" United States.

LIGHTHOUSE BAPTIST CHURCH A Family Church for Your Family

Serving the Camp Zama, NAF Atsugi, Sagami Depot, NSF Kamiseya and Sagami-Nagasaki Housing Area.
Church Phone Number 046-298-3933
www.lighthousebaptistchurch.info

Sunday School	9:30 A.M.
Morning Worship	10:30 A.M.
Sunday Evening	6:00 P.M.
Wednesday Bible Study/Prayer Meeting	6:30 P.M.
Watch and Praise Praise Club	Preschool-6th grade
7-12th grade	
Ladies Bible Studies Monthly	
Men's Prayer Breakfast Monthly	
Nursery Provided for every service	

We at Lighthouse Baptist Church have a strong commitment to serving our military community through many diverse ministries. We invite you to join us and share in the excitement of worshipping a true and living God.
Dr. C.L. Callahan, Pastor john316@iea.atn.ne.jp

Government fines First Command \$12 million

Stars and Stripes

First Command Financial Services, one of the best-known companies marketing financial products to military families, agreed Wednesday to pay \$12 million to settle accusations that it used misleading information to sell mutual funds to thousands of military officers over the last five years, the New York Times reported Thursday.

A branch of the Securities and Exchange Commission said that First Command exaggerated the track record of its high-cost fund products — with fees that ate up 50 percent of an investor's first-year contributions — and misrepresented the costs and availability of cheaper investment alternatives, the paper reported.

The company neither admitted nor denied the accusations, but accepted the punishments, which included a formal censure.

The company announced this month that it no longer would sell the products, called contractual plan or systematic investment plans. Such plans require them to pay the sales fees upfront.

Stephen M. Cutler, enforcement director of the SEC, said First Command had "targeted members of our armed forces" with sales pitches "that didn't tell the full story."

The conduct raised special concerns, said Mary L. Schapiro, the vice chairwoman of NASD, because of First Command's use of affinity marketing techniques to win the trust of its customers.

"You had former military personnel selling to current military personnel, brokerage firms controlled by former military personnel," Schapiro told the Times. "That makes the omissions and misleading statements all the more troubling."

Army PCS orders may take drastic change

Officers may receive as little as 45 days' notice instead of the normal 120 to 180, officials say

By LISA BURGESS
Stars and Stripes

ARLINGTON, Va. — Some Army officers and their families may now have as little as 45 days' notice to report to a new duty station, according to service personnel officials.

The change is being driven by the "near-term turbulence" of wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and the Army's simultaneous reorganization, said Lt. Col. Kevin Segner, a spokesman for the Human Resources Command.

Traditionally, officers received 120 to 180 days' notification for permanent change of station, or PCS, Arata said.

The system could affect about 51,000 active-duty Army officers and 11,000 warrant officers between now and the end of fiscal 2005 in October, Arata said.

As was first reported by The (Baltimore) Sun on Dec. 8, the Army's Human Resources Command's Officer Operations Division started notifying the first group of about 2,100 officers in September that they would need to PCS on short notice.

Two more groups will receive

similar notifications in fiscal 2005, with the next letters starting to go out the first week of January, Arata said.

As it became clear earlier this year that Iraq deployments would continue until 2006 or longer, Army leaders decided to change the officer reassignment system, which filled vacancies on a more or less random basis, Arata said.

Instead, the leaders decided that units that are deployed or about to be deployed would get priority when it came to filling officer vacancies, Arata said.

And because things come up in units preparing for Iraq or Afghanistan, Arata said, such a system meant that officers destined for the war units would probably receive much less notice to PCS.

For example, a lieutenant may break his leg during predeployment training, and as a result, his replacement would need to move quickly to take command of his new platoon.

But because such last-minute requirements rarely occur in large numbers, "most officers will continue to receive 120 and 180 days notice on pending PCS moves," Arata said.

In another effort to fully man deployed units, Army leaders have changed the status of officers working for Multi-National Force headquarters billets in Iraq and Afghanistan to a one-year, permanent change of station status, Arata said.

Until now, the Army used to deploy individual officers to these billets for a period of 179 days on a Temporary Change of Station, or TCS, basis.

The new policy will affect about 433 officers — 395 commissioned officers and 38 warrant officers, Arata said.

Army leaders decided to change the TCS to a PCS order because it provides more continuity for the headquarters staff, while at the same time, the officer's home unit can request a replacement for the slot opened by the PCS.

The Army does not allow such replacement if a soldier is on TCS orders.

PCS orders also allows families of the assigned officers to move to a different location while the officer is deployed, if they so choose, Arata said.

E-mail Lisa Burgess at: burgessl@strips.osd.mil

Rumsfeld to begin personally signing all condolence letters

By LOU SHANE III
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld will begin personally signing condolence letters sent to families of troops killed in Iraq and Afghanistan, after receiving criticism over his use of mechanical signatures.

In a statement provided to Stars and Stripes on Thursday, Rumsfeld tacitly admitted that in the past he had not personally signed the letters, but said he was responsible for writing and approving each of the 1,000-plus messages sent to the fallen soldiers' families.

"I have directed that in the future I sign each letter," he said in the statement.

"I am deeply grateful for the many letters I have received from the families of those who have been killed in the service of our country, and I recognize and honor their personal loss."

In a separate statement, Pentagon spokesman Larry Di Rita said: "In the interest of ensuring timely contact with grieving family members, he has not individually signed each letter."

Department of Defense officials

for the past few weeks had said only that the content of the letters was private.

But several families of troops killed overseas said they were sure the notes they received had not been signed by hand, and said they were angry that Rumsfeld was not paying attention to their loss.

"To me it's an insult, not only as someone who lost a loved one but also as someone who served in Iraq," Army Spc. Ivan Medina told Stars and Stripes.

"This doesn't show our families the respect they deserve," said Medina, a New York resident whose twin brother, Irving, was killed in a roadside bombing in Iraq this summer.

Illinois resident Bette Sullivan, whose son John was killed in November 2003 while working as an Army mechanic in Iraq, was incensed when she, her son's wife and her grandchildren received the exact same condolence letter with the apparently stamped signature.

"If each family receives two copies, how many signatures does that amount to?" she asked in an e-mail response to Stars. "I can understand the use of stamped

signatures for his brothers' memoranda, but for those of his wife and children and mother? No, no, no."

Retired Army Col. David Hawkworth, an author and frequent critic of the Department of Defense, publicly criticized Rumsfeld in a syndicated column earlier this month for not reviewing each KIA letter personally.

He called the fake signatures "like having it signed by a monkey."

"Using those machines is pretty common, but it shouldn't be in cases of those who have died in action," he said. "How can [DOD officials] feel the emotional impact of that loss if they're not even looking at the letters?"

Hawkworth said he objected to using the stamped signatures for promotion and commendation letters as well, but said he personally handling the condolence letters is a much more serious offense.

FAMILY members had expressed similar concerns to Stars about President Bush's signature on his condolence letters, but Allen Abney, spokesman for the president, said that Bush does personally sign the letters sent from the White House.

E-mail Lou Shane at: shanel@strips.osd.mil

Honoring Tillman



PHOTOS BY MIKE THEILER/Courtesy of the United Service Organizations

Comedian and actor Robin Williams, second from left, takes part in a groundbreaking ceremony for a USO center named in honor of Pat Tillman on Thursday at Bagram Air Base in Afghanistan. Next to Williams, from left, are NFL Hall of Famer John Elway, model Leanne Tweeden, Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Gen. Richard B. Myers and USO President and CEO Ned Powell. The USO center will honor Tillman, the former Arizona Cardinals safety who left the NFL to join the Army Rangers and was killed in Afghanistan.



Tweeden throws a football into the crowd of troops gathered at the main U.S. base at Bagram, north of Kabul, Afghanistan, on Thursday. Tweeden joined Williams, Elway and Myers to bring a little holiday cheer to U.S. forces.

Yokota Baptist Church

Pastor Warren Webster

日本語訳もあります YBC members are interpreted in Japanese
REACHING THE MILITARY AND JAPAN, ONE PERSON AT A TIME

Yokota Christian Academy	M-F	Friday	
Sunday		Awano Club	1900
Early Service	0830	Monthly	
Sunday School	1000	Mens Prayer Breakfast	1st Sat
Morning Service	1100	Ladies Meeting	1st Sat
Evening Service	1800		
Monday			
Faith Bible Institute	1830		
Tuesday			
Soul Winning & Visitation	1830		
Wednesday			
Evening Service & Prayer Mtg	1900		
Patch & Pee Wee Clubs	1900		

CH _ CH
What is missing?

0425-52-7254
www.yokotabaptistchurch.org

At Fussa Gate: Left on 16 to light. Turn right. Take next left. Church on left.

In Iraq, video war is break from real fight

BY JOSH WHITE

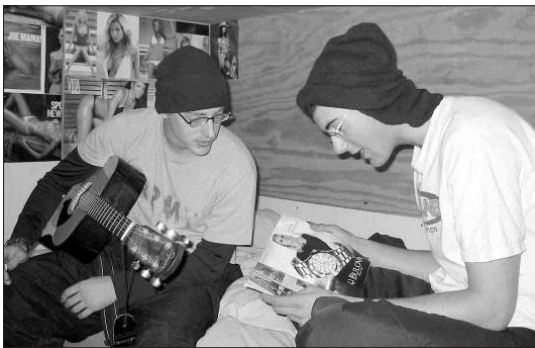
The Washington Post

CAMP LIBERTY, Iraq — "Die, die, die!" shouted Pfc. Joe Girardin, rising suddenly to his feet, grimacing. He launched a grenade, triumphantly throwing a fist into the air. "Boom!"

This was the war scene in a small trailer at this U.S. military camp near Baghdad in the wee hours of the morning last weekend, amid empty Pringles tubes, Pepsi cans, cigarette boxes and the swirling tunes of Jimi Hendrix and Metallica. The 29-inch color screen burst with machine-gun fire and rocket blasts, but the only real victims were pride and lost time.

Outside the trailer, in the chilly desert darkness, the real war continued. Soldiers prepared for missions and patrols in armored Humvees, shouldered their M-16s and braced for the possibility of a car bomb or an enemy assault. Mortar rounds and explosions sent hollow thuds echoing for miles.

The trailer was an escape for the young soldiers. Girardin, 19, of Long Island, N.Y., was glued to his Army-issued television and the video game images pulsing across it. He was stalking Spc. Cris Sanders, 21, of Miami, who seemed always to get the better of him — and all other challengers this night. Sanders grabbed a sniper



THE WASHINGTON POST/ATVP

Spc. Brian Schroeder, left, takes a break from playing music to look at a magazine with Pfc. Joe Girardin. Pinups, but no pornography, decorate the trailer's walls. Between guard duty and patrols, soldiers in Iraq gather to crash fast cars, play volleyball with buxom women and wage virtual warfare.

rifle and hid. Within moments, Girardin's character was lying in a pool of blood, Sanders' foil standing over him, continuing to pump bullets into the dead body. Girardin punched his bed furiously as a wry smile spread across Sanders' face.

Like the teenagers and college students across America who sit on couches late on weekend nights and into the next morning, these

soldiers spend their free hours on the outskirts of the Iraqi capital killing one another in Xbox and PlayStation2 games such as Halo and Mortal Kombat. Between guard duty and patrols and shifts

at the dining facility, they gather to crash fast cars, play volleyball with buxom women and mimic warfare.

It's a virtual reality that at least temporarily hides the real war outside.

"I don't like to leave the room, if possible," Girardin said, only partially in jest. He spends his days in a large tent as an administrator with the headquarters company of the 2nd Brigade, 10th Mountain Division.

The walls are papered with images of scantily clad women, a collection of magazine pinups that include dozens of celebrities and supermodels from the pages of *For Him* Magazine and *Maxim*. Because pornography is banned on these deployments, it's all PG-13.

Pfc. David Usry, 25, of Tampa, is Girardin's roommate, a stocky cook with a nearly shaved head and the oldest member of this social club. Sitting on his bed, just a few hours before having to go back on duty, Usry smiles after mutilating a foe in the game *Mortal Kombat*.

Sitting next to him is Spc. Robert McKinney, 23, of Brooklyn, N.Y., whose eyes go wide when he shoots at an enemy in *Halo*. "Don't beg, don't beg," McKinney chimes in. "Everyone gets to die."

"I'm sort of zone out and know we can sit here and kill each other, and no one gets hurt," McKinney says. "Everyone comes out alive."

Shop Camp Zama's "One Week til Christmas" Sale!!



Military Star Card Offer

No down payment, no payments and no interest until April 2005 on purchases made between 17-24 December 2004

**Monday Only
December 20**

25% off
All Christmas
CDs and DVDs

40% off
All holiday motif clothing

50% off
Christmas Trees, lights,
selected decorations
(excludes hallmarks)

Double Stamp Day
at Camp Zama
Popeyes

**Tuesday Only
December 21**

First Day of Winter Sale

40% off
All outerwear and outerwear accessories
Flannel sheets, Instant In-store rebate

40% off
All Camp Zama Souvenir T-shirts
(excludes Trojan uniform clothing)

40% off
All holiday decorative potpourri

Double Stamp Day
at Camp Zama
Burger King

**Wednesday Only
December 22**

Kids' night gift idea sale

30% off
All pre-wrapped E&B giftware

25% off
All Juniors DeCoded,
Mudd, Tommy Hilfiger

50% off
All children's outerwear
and accessories

50% off
All holiday motif clothing

Food court - We Deliver
263 3336
Please call for details!!

**Thursday Only
December 23**

Eve of
Christmas Eve Sale!!

25% off
All Men's Junction West Sweaters

40% off
All Men's Nautica, Chaps

30% off
Bahlsen holiday cookies

30% off
All holiday candy

Burger King
Kids Meal
99 cents

**Friday Hours
Christmas Eve
December 24**

Main Store open 0900-1800



Watch for
50% off
Hallmark Sale
Beginning
December 26th

Look for
instant rebates
specials!

AAFES
aafes.com...open all the time!

Compassion
2004

Military
STAR

MasterCard
VISA
Discover

Gift
Great stocking stuffer

Sorry, no adjustments
or layaways,
limited to stock on hand

You Save
an average of
21.89%
when you shop
at AAFES!

Your Camp Zama PX is
open 0900 - 2000
Christmas Eve Hours
0900 - 1800

IN THE WORLD

Pol: Most Japanese want U.S. forces reduced

Citizens of both nations express faith in Japan-U.S. Security Treaty

The Yomiuri Shimbun

TOKYO — Recent polls showed that while both Japanese and Americans thought the two countries' security arrangements were strong, there was marked disagreement over how many U.S. troops should remain in Japan. A slightly growing number of Japanese want the troops reduced or sent home while a majority of Americans want them to stay.

The joint Yomiuri Shimbun-Gallup survey showed that about half the Japanese population does not trust the United States and more than 60 percent of U.S. citizens feel the United States is not well liked overseas.

The survey's release highlights the changing public opinion in Japan and the United States following the re-election of President Bush.

Concerning the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty in the Asia-Pacific region, 64 percent of the respondents in Japan and 75 percent in the United States agreed it was effective, indicating that the strong foundations of the treaty have withstood the test of time.

The figure for Japanese respondents rose eight percentage points, while the figure for American respondents fell two points from last year.

The polls showed a sizeable gap in U.S.

and Japanese opinions over the size of U.S. forces that should be stationed in Japan under the bilateral security alliance.

In Japan, 42 percent said the size of U.S. forces in the nation should be reduced, accounting for the largest percentage of respondents for the third consecutive year.

Thirty-eight percent of Japanese respondents called for the current size to be maintained, while 12 percent said all U.S. forces should be withdrawn from Japan, and 2 percent said the size should be increased.

Compared with last year's results, the number calling for a reduction increased a percentage point, while that for respondents calling for a complete withdrawal rose three points.

In the United States, 59 percent said the number should be maintained and accounted for the largest percentage of the responses to this question for the fifth consecutive year, but that number also declined from the previous year's total for the first time in a row.

Twenty percent said the number of forces should be reduced.

On seeing the survey results, a senior

Japanese Foreign Ministry official said, "I think the basis of Japanese people's trust in the United States has not faltered."

"But the results might have been affected by views of the United States that soured due to President Bush's stance on unilateralism," the official said.

In this year's survey, respondents from the two nations differed greatly on whether they trusted the other country.

In the United States, 67 percent said they trusted Japan and only 29 percent said they did not.

But in Japan, the number of respondents who said they did not trust the United States rose eight points from the previous year to 53 percent, much higher than the 38 percent who said they did trust the United States.

Since 2000, the only other time those who said they did not trust the United States registered a majority was last year at 45 percent, and 41 percent said they did trust the other country.

In this year's survey, the gap had more than tripled.

The statistical analysis shows that younger Japanese respondents were more likely

to express distrust in the United States.

According to the survey, 75 percent of Japanese said they were more or less dissatisfied with the U.S.-led Iraq's reconstruction and the safety level in the country.

Only 13 percent said they were more or less satisfied with U.S. policy in Iraq.

Among those who said they were not satisfied, 61 percent said they did not trust the United States.

In the United States, the numbers of those who were satisfied or not with the country's policy on Iraq were much closer, with 52 percent saying they were satisfied and 47 percent saying otherwise.

Concerning what the respondents considered necessary action to ensure smooth-running reconstruction efforts in Iraq, 89 percent of U.S. respondents said securing people's safety should be top priority.

Only 27 percent in Japan chose the same answer.

In addition, 61 percent of Japanese respondents answered no when asked whether they held a favorable feeling toward Bush since his reelection, while 38 percent said yes.

Among those who said no, 71 percent said they did not trust the United States.

In the United States, 60 percent said Bush favored, whereas 39 percent said they did not.

Suspects arrested in Philippine bombing

By TERESA CEROJANO

The Associated Press

MANILA, Philippines — Five suspects in a bombing that killed at least 14 people at a southern Philippine market have been arrested with explosives in their possession, military officials said Thursday.

Military spokesman Lt. Col. Buenaventura Pascual said two women and three men were apprehended Wednesday in General Santos, where Sunday's bombing also wounded 70.

Authorities recovered from them a mortar, a blasting cap, a hand grenade, electrical wire, C-4 plastic explosives and a pack of an unknown white powder, the officials said.

Col. Alfredo Cayton, the area brigade commander, said one of the suspects was identified by a witness as a bomber.

He refused to elaborate, and it wasn't immediately clear if the suspects belong to any terrorist organization. He said authorities have "a solid lead" and that divulging details "might compromise our ongoing operation."

National police chief Edgar Aguiray said investigators were looking into the possibility that a dispute between two groups vying for power over a market stall may have led to the bombing, but the involvement of militant groups has not been confirmed.

"We are following all leads including the business rivalry [angle]," Cayton said. "Although we have the suspects, we are interrogating them to determine the actual motive."

The investigation in General Santos, about 620 miles south of Manila, is also being helped by Australian police, said senior police inspector Maximino Sebastian.



KOREA NEWS SERVICE/AP

In this undated photo released by the Korea News Service in Tokyo Wednesday, North Korean leader Kim Jong Il, center, inspects the construction site of a power plant in North Korea. North Korea warned Wednesday it would take a decision by Japan to place economic sanctions on the communist state as a declaration of war and take appropriate action in response.

Others are unidentified.

Japan likely to impose sanctions on N. Korea

By MARI YAMAGUCHI

The Associated Press

TOKYO — Japan will likely impose sanctions on North Korea for refusing to fully account for Japanese citizens it kidnapped decades ago despite Pyongyang's declaration that it would view such retaliation as an act of war, the foreign minister said Thursday.

Ruling party lawmakers have threatened sanctions after tests last week on remains Pyongyang claimed belonged to a Japanese girl kidnapped by North Korean agents in 1977 showed that they were someone else's.

North Korea accused Tokyo of doctoring the DNA analysis on the remains, and said Wednesday it would consider economic sanctions by Japan "a declaration of war."

"There is no doubt [economic sanction] is one likely option at some point," Japanese Foreign Minister Nobutaka Machimura said.

"But we have to think carefully whether to use it immediately or not."

He did not specify when Japan would impose sanctions or what the penalties would be.

A ruling party panel has suggested the government adopt sanctions that vary in severity depending on how the North responds to Tokyo's demands for information about Japanese kidnapping victims.

The proposals include freezing trade between the two coun-

tries and banning North Korean ships from Japanese ports.

Machimura said the government will continue to seek North Korea's "sincere" response to the abduction issue and downplay the threat of war should Japan impose economic penalties on the communist country.

"There is no such formula saying sanctions equal war," he said, adding that the United States was not at war with the North despite maintaining sanctions against it.

He said Japan would explain its position to China and other countries concerned that sanctions might complicate efforts to persuade the North to resume six-nation talks on dismantling its nuclear weapons program.

North Korea admitted kidnapping 13 Japanese citizens to train spies and allowed five of them to return to Japan in 2002.

Pyongyang said the other eight were dead but has offered no convincing proof of the deaths, and many in Japan suspect some of the victims may still be alive.

The North handed over two sets of human remains to a Japanese delegation last month as proof that Megumi Yokota and another kidnapping victim were dead. Tests, however, showed that the remains belonged to other, unidentified people.

Japan's Chief Cabinet Secretary Hiroyuki Hosoda said Thursday that Tokyo would submit evidence from its DNA analysis of the remains to Pyongyang next week.

Hotels in Indonesia tighten security

BY CHRIS BRUMMITT

The Associated Press

JAKARTA, Indonesia — Hilton hotels in Indonesia tightened security Thursday at their three properties after authorities ordered a nationwide security crackdown following warnings from foreign governments that terrorists were preparing to launch attacks against Western targets.

Australia's warning was unusually specific, saying it had "credible information" that terrorists could be targeting the Hilton Hotel chain in the country. The



Indonesia police officers take guard Wednesday during security checks at the entrance of the Jakarta Hilton Hotel in Indonesia. Five foreign governments issued warnings, saying terrorists are ready to carry out attacks against Western targets.

United States, Britain, New Zealand and Japan also issued warnings but did not mention specific targets.

At the Hilton in Jakarta, police armed with automatic weapons stood guard next to Christmas trees hung with tinsel, searching bags and checking cars. Hotel officials said they had not seen a mass exodus of guests, but that some groups had canceled functions.

Suspected al-Qaida-linked bombings have launched three bloody bombings on Western targets in

the world's most populous Muslim nation in the past three years.

Despite scores of arrests, local police and foreign governments have repeatedly warned more attacks were likely. Several countries warn their citizens not to travel to the country at all.

"We are doing our utmost to increase our vigilance," said Jakarta police spokesman Ciptono, who goes by a single name. "In light of the threat, the national police chief has ordered the Christmas and New Year's security operation, which was supposed to start Saturday, to begin immediately."

ARE YOU LOOKING FOR NEW WORLDWIDE CAREER OPPORTUNITIES? LOOK AT SPARTAN!

Professional Pilot
Aviation Mechanic
Avionics
Communications
Quality Control
Nondestructive Testing

www.spartan.edu
1-918 / 831-8686

Email: spartan@mail.spartan.edu

- Degree and Diploma Programs
12 Months to 30 Months
- 50% hands-on training
- Most programs approved for VA Benefits

SPARTAN
COLLEGE OF AERONAUTICS
AND TECHNOLOGY
Tulsa, OK • Licensed by CDPVS

Afghan special police seize 15 tons of opium

BY PAUL ALEXANDER

The Associated Press

KABUL, Afghanistan — A special anti-narcotics task force has raided drug laboratories in eastern Afghanistan, seizing more than 15 tons of opium as part of President Hamid Karzai's crackdown on what he calls the country's biggest threat, officials said Thursday.

That amount of opium, one of the largest confiscations in recent years, could have been refined into about 1½ tons of heroin. U.N. surveys estimate Afghanistan accounted for three-quarters of the world's opium last year.

The raids took place Wednesday in Nangarhar province's Aclun district, an Interior Ministry statement said, adding that Afghan Special Narcotics Force agents also destroyed 24 opium presses that are used to refine the drug. They also seized three tons of chemicals used to process opium into heroin and five AK-47 assault rifles.

But no arrests were made as the labs' operators apparently fled just before the operation began.

"This is a legitimate action ... to destroy the drug economy in Afghanistan," Interior Minister Ali Jalali said. "This operation is a proven example for other growers

or traffickers that from now on, the government of Afghanistan is committed to destroying the drug economy."

Another bust last week yielded nearly two tons of opium.

Karzai said in his Dec. 6 inaugural address that the country's booming drug economy — estimated to account for 60 percent of gross domestic product — will be the top priority in his fresh five-year term. He said it is linked to terrorism and called it a bigger threat than the Taliban and al-Qaida insurgents who mount almost daily attacks in the countryside.

The United Nations has warned that the exploding narcotics industry is turning the impoverished country into a "narco-state."

"Without substantial progress in addressing the sources of insecurity, reconstruction efforts and the establishment of viable state institutions will continue to falter, and the economy may well be subsumed by the illicit drugs industry," U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan said earlier this month.

Afghan and British officials preparing a crackdown on Afghanistan's booming illegal narcotics industry have begun training a legal task force for special courts they hope will begin jailing heroin and opium kingpins within months.

U.S. helo crashes in Afghanistan; no casualties

KABUL, Afghanistan — A U.S. military helicopter crashed Thursday in northwestern Afghanistan, injuring both pilots, who were then evacuated, a coalition statement said.

"This crash was not the result of any hostile action, and, according to the pilots, there was no fire reported from the ground," the statement said. "The crash site was secured immediately, and there were no enemy forces reported in the area."

The pilots' injuries were "non life-threatening," it added.

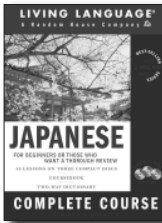
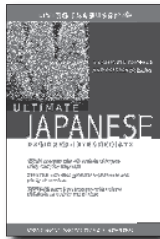
The Army OH-58 Kiowa helicopter went down just north of Shindand in Herat province. An investigation will be conducted to determine the cause of the crash.

From The Associated Press

Experience

JAPAN

With **LIVING LANGUAGE** textbooks, guides and compact discs



Available at select bookstores

Living Offbase? Save \$\$ with our New Low Rates!

*Credit for new Customers based on equivalent rate to U.S. Existing Customers Please Call! E-Mail for New Rate Plan

Japan	to the USA	Korea	Remote
9 ⁹ C	48 States	7 ⁹ C	5 ⁹ C
From OFFBASE	From OFFBASE	Calling via DSN	

* Ask for your **FREE** Personal 800 Number in the US for Friends and Family to call you only, at your expense, and at low US rates.

* Ask for a **FREE** ONECARD Calling Card, which can be used in over 50 countries and, where permitted, over the DSN network, and save up to 50% over AT&T!

* Cellphone calls at higher rate.

- ◆ American Quality since 1994!
- ◆ Fast, Easy Sign Up Anytime!
- ◆ Credit Card/US Bank Debit!
- ◆ Use with Cellular Phones**
- ◆ Great Customer Service 24/7!

For more info or secure sign up:
www.militel.net

CALL TOLL FREE 24 HRS



Japan	00-531-13-0436
S.Korea	00-308-14-0025
E-mail	info@militel.net

Castro loyalists love to hate James Cason

BY TRACEY EATON

The Dallas Morning News

HAVANA — He's Public Enemy No. 1 in Cuba and relishes the role.

James Cason, America's top diplomat in Havana, got right to work after arriving two years ago. He journeyed across the island, meeting with political dissidents and other supposed "subversives." He urged them to fight for democracy and handed out tens of thousands of books and shortwave radios.

Cuban authorities reacted quickly, jailing 75 dissidents and journalists and banning Cason's countrywide jaunts. But he hasn't ended the U.S. official's crusade.

More than 4,000 Cubans visit Cason's Havana headquarters every month. They get free Internet access. They pick up books and pro-democracy literature. And they sit glued to cable television, which is unavailable to most of Cuba's 11 million inhabitants.

"We used to have an outreach program. Now we have an inreach program," Cason said in an interview. Cuban authorities "would love to stop it. But they can't." Ricardo Alarcon, president of Cuba's National Assembly, isn't amused. He accuses the Bush administration of interfering with the country's internal affairs and violating international law. And he calls Cason a "fourth-rate" bureaucrat.

Cason, expected to remain in Cuba for one more year, said he doesn't mind such criticism outside his sprawling \$35 million ambassador's residence in Havana, he pulled a black badge from his shirt pocket. It was an Army corporal's pin.

"I'm going to wear this until the day I leave Cuba," Cason said. "I may be just a corporal, but I'm proud of it. I'm closer to the ground, closer to the people."

Alarcon, he adds, is the true bureaucrat. He leads Cuba's national assembly, which meets only two times a year and has not voted against any government initiatives since the beginning of the revolution in 1959, Cason said.

"I don't call him Alarcon," I call him 'Alcaran,' Scorpion. I wonder why the Cubans don't like me," he said.

He paused for a moment, sipping a rum-laced mojito. Cuba's national flag, Cuba's government, he said, is a crumbling, bankrupt regime. No one knows when it will fall, but it's going to be sooner than the second it is inevitable, he said.

"We know there's going to be a transition and we know it's not going to be much longer."

Key to the country's future is President Fidel Castro, who shattered his knee and broke his arm when he fell in October. Little will change in Cuba while the 78-year-old leader is alive, the American diplomat contends.

"This is a one-man show. This is Fidel. Anybody who thinks he's going to be a democrat is nuts. This guy's not going to change."

But after Castro fades from the scene, Cuban leaders who care nothing about socialism are going to emerge, Cason said.

"There are reformists out there. And when the opportunity comes, they'll flip-flop and say, 'I've been a democrat for all my life.'"

Expected to succeed Castro is his brother, Raul Castro, chief of Cuba's Revolutionary Armed Forces. Many Cuba watchers see him as less radical than Fidel Castro and open to economic reforms.

But if the 73-year-old Raul dies first, that could lessen the chances of a smooth, peaceful transition to democracy, Cason said.

Bush administration officials have said that if asked, they will give massive economic and material aid to a future democratic government in Cuba.

Officials in Cuba aren't convinced. They say they don't trust Americans and believe the United States would invade the country if given the chance.

This month, Cuban officials are holding military exercises aimed at showing the United States that their guerrilla war strategy will defeat any invader.

"The Americans should watch closely so that they do not commit the same mistakes

they made in Vietnam and are now making in Iraq," Raul Castro told reporters this month.

Cason said Cubans don't have to worry. "We have no plans to invade. Our policy is clear and transparent. We want a rapid and peaceful transition."

He said Cuban officials warn of an imminent American attack to distract Cubans from the country's dismal economy.

The country has struggled since the former Soviet Union cut off \$5.8 billion in annual cash and subsidies to Cuba more than a decade ago.

Short on cash, Castro banned the circulation of dollars in November and asked that Cubans exchange their greenbacks for Cuban pesos.

Cason estimates that ordinary Cubans had as much as \$2 billion "stashed under the mattress" and that the new measures took \$400 million to \$700 million out of circulation.

Those who didn't exchange their money have no confidence in the Cuban peso, however, and believe it will be worthless in the post-Castro era, Cason said.

"The only way the Cuban peso can survive if it gets a huge dose of Viagra," he said. Cuban officials have "no silver bullets out there to get their economy going."

Castro loyalists call those words offensive and insulting.

Cason "is the personification of Bush in Cuba. Cason is — pardon the word — a beast. A tank of war. He's not a diplomat," said Lisandro Otero, a Cuban writer and intellectual who won the country's national literature prize in 2002.

Tracking device bill

PARIS — French lawmakers on Thursday adopted a proposal to make repeat sex offenders wear electronic bracelets that will allow authorities to track their movements once they leave jail.

Such tracking devices have been authorized in France since 1997 as an alternative to incarceration and a way to fight overcrowding in prisons. However, the bill is likely to get an easy ride in the Senate — is aimed at keeping track of those who have already served prison terms.

Opposition Socialists opposed the measure, and skeptical centrists also refused to approve it. Only the governing conservatives, the Union for a Popular Movement, voted for the measure. The party has a strong majority in both houses.

Socialist lawmaker Christophe Carcesche said he saw a "big brother" in the legislation.

The electronic threat, worn on the wrist and ankle, would be reserved for sex offenders who have served five to 10 years in prison, based on the decision of a special court. The movement of the person in question would be traced through a Global Positioning System.

"This is the end of the right to forget," said the Union of Lawyers of France, opposed to the measure.

Justice Minister Dominique Perben, arguing in favor of the bill, said that France is obliged to take such a step to save potential victims of sex crimes.

From The Associated Press

Bethlehem's Paradise Hotel opens doors for first Christmas since 2000

BY RAMIT FLUSHNICK-MASTI

The Associated Press

BETHLEHEM, West Bank — The floors are polished, a Christmas tree glitters near the bar and the dining room is ready for hundreds of guests: The luxury Paradise Hotel is open for business for the first time since the latest Palestinian uprising erupted in 2000.

Bethlehem's flagship hotel, where Israeli and Palestinian dignitaries mingled at Christmas galas in the 1980s, mirrors the ups and downs of the conflict, from shaky coexistence to destruction and now the struggle to rebuild.

The \$1 million restoration of the hotel, and a swell of Christmas cheer in Jesus' traditional birthplace, are another sign of the new sense of optimism that is pervading the Middle East after Yasser Arafat's death Nov. 11.

Throughout Bethlehem, most of the major hotels say occupancy is up 10 percent to 20 percent over last year when violence was still raging. Room prices are reasonable, at about \$40 a night including breakfast, and some of the hotels are also planning parties.

However, Bethlehem is still far from the glory days before the Palestinian uprising, when thousands of pilgrims celebrated in colorfully decorated manger squares outside the Church of the Nativity, built on the grotto where tradition says Jesus was born.

But Bethlehem is still relatively sparse and hotels have plenty of vacancies. The 25-foot-high concrete slabs that make up Israel's



A huge inflatable Santa Claus decorates a gift shop near the Church of Nativity, traditionally believed to be the birthplace of Jesus, in the West Bank town of Bethlehem on Wednesday. Bethlehem's traditional Christmas tree and decorations will adorn the city's Manger Square.

West Bank barrier have effectively cut Bethlehem in half, forcing thousands to take long detours to reach the center of town.

A year ago, the six-story Paradise was still a bleak concrete skeleton after it was hit by Israeli tank shells and caught fire during a battle between Palestinian gunmen and Israeli soldiers.

In recent months, the owners have renovated the ground level and the top floor, completing 75 rooms.

Honey-colored Jerusalem stone covers the facades, green window

bars glimmer in the winter sun, and spotless automatic doors open to an airy, marble lobby. Wicker chairs covered with paisley cushions adorn the lobby.

Last month, the hotel hosted guests for the first time in four years. "It was like a dream. I never thought that we would have groups again," said co-owner George Abu Aita.

Thirty percent of the rooms are booked for Christmas. Abu Aita said, and reservations have also come in for next year, through October.

Tourism in Israel and the Palestinian areas was badly hurt by the fighting, but began to pick up in 2004. Some 100,000 visitors came to Bethlehem for day trips between January and November, up 50 percent from the year before.

If the situation continues to improve, Abu Aita plans to invest an additional \$300,000 to renovate the hotel's other four floors, where it is decorated with red ribbons, balls and apples.

For the first time in four years, Abu Aita is busy preparing a Christmas party, where he will serve 15 turkeys to more than 200 guests. The hotel's Christmas tree is decorated with red ribbons, balls and apples.

"Two years ago during Christmas and New Year's, there was a curfew so we had to stay at home all the time. Last year, Christmas was very quiet; we stayed at home. This year we have the hotel and we can say to our best to be happy," Abu Aita said. "Now, the time is right."

The past four years' posters of Arafat, the late Palestinian leader, decorated in Manger Square.

At the hotel's entrance, down the street from the Paradise, an enormous inflatable plastic Santa Claus, made by the company "The Last four years it was very difficult for all the people here, in all the West Bank, in Jerusalem and everywhere," said to our employee Ragda Wahbeh. "We are expecting this year to be much better than the years before."

FSB chief: U.S. spies very active in Russia

BY VLADIMIR ISACHENKO

The Associated Press

MOSCOW — Spies from the United States, China and North Korea are the most active among foreign agents trying to steal Russia's secrets, Russia's top spy said Wednesday.

Nikolai Patrushev, the head of the Federal Security Service, known by its Russian acronym FSB, said that his agency had exposed 18 foreign intelligence officers this year and caught six red-handed, according

to the Interfax and ITAR-Tass news agencies.

He did not indicate the nationalities of the alleged spies.

Patrushev said that the FSB — the chief of the successor agency to the KGB — had this year also exposed 89 other alleged agents of foreign intelligence services. Thirteen Russian citizens have been convicted of divulging state secrets, he said. "Active intelligence operations by a number of foreign intelligence services are posing a real and serious threat to our national

interests and state security," Patrushev said during a meeting with top Russian media executives.

He singled out intelligence services of the United States, China and North Korea as being the most active, the Interfax reported.

Several Russian citizens have been convicted of spying for the United States in recent years.

Patrushev said his agency had also averted more than 200 intelligence attacks in Russia this year. He said an FSB list of people who pose the most serious threat to Russia's se-

curity was topped by Chechen warlord Shamil Basayev and rebel leader Aslan Maskhadov.

Basayev has claimed responsibility for September seizure of the school in Beslan and other recent terror attacks in Russia this year that together have killed more than 440 people. Maskhadov is a former president of Chechnya.

Patrushev also said that about 10 emissaries of the al-Qaida terror network are currently in the North Caucasus region, which includes Chechnya, and his agency was working to "neutralize" them.

Panda food shortage

BEIJING — Giant pandas in southern China face possible starvation as a type of bamboo they feed on becomes inedible as it blooms — an event that occurs only once every 60 years.

Some 19 giant wild pandas living in the Piankou Nature Reserve already have had their food supply reduced by 20 to 25 percent since arrow bamboo began flowering, the official Xinhua News Agency said Thursday.

The bamboo typically blossoms every 60 years, taking about a decade to complete the process, the report said. It did not say when the latest cycle began.

"The consequence of the arrow bamboo blossoming is very serious," Li Zuobin, a wildlife specialist, was quoted as saying.

It would probably force the pandas to adapt to other kinds of bamboo, Xinhua said, citing Zhang Heping, director of the Wolong Nature Reserve, another panda habitat in China's southwestern Sichuan province.

"In the process, the strong giant pandas will live on, but the weak ones will die," he said.

There have so far been no illnesses among the Piankou panda population due to the food shortage in the 1,448-square mile reserve.

Officials plan to move the animals to new habitats if bamboo supplies get dangerously low, Xinhua said.

China says it had more than 1,750 giant pandas in the wild at the end of 2003, including 161 raised in captivity.

From The Associated Press

No remorse: Slasher quickly put to death

Desire to die left no room for human rights groups to protest Japan's secretive executions

BY ERIC TALMADGE

The Associated Press

OSAKA, Japan — Mamoru Takuma's wife had heard executions happened only when Parliament was in recess, and rumor had it the justice minister was planning to resign in the next week or two, another bad sign.

But the voice on the intercom caught her off guard.

It was midmorning. She had been doing some research on the Internet for a lawsuit her husband was working on. It was a complicated matter and she was planning to visit him in prison that afternoon to brief him on what she had learned in the week since they last met.

The prison official was businesslike, even curt.

"Your husband died well," he said.

"As soon as he opened his mouth, I fell to the ground and covered my ears," she said. "I never expected

ed our time together to be so short."

By any measure, Mamoru Takuma was a vicious murderer.

On June 8, 2001, he burst into an elementary school on the outskirts of this western Japan city and began slashing the terrified children around him. Eight died. Takuma had no particular connection to any of his victims. He simply wanted to die, and to take others with him. He saw killing children as the best means to that end — knowing that the crime would ensure he was hanged.

Death-row inmates in Japan can languish in prison for decades, but Takuma made no appeal, offered no apologies and demanded he be put to death immediately.

His strident attitude pushed both advocates and opponents of capital punishment into a corner. Supporters feared the more he demanded death, the more the government would appear to be merely acting as his tool. So, with record speed, Japan's most notorious killer got his wish.

Japan and the United States are the only advanced industrialized countries that retain the death



Nobuto Hosaka, an opposition party member, shows drawings of the death chamber on Nov. 30 in Tokyo. Opponents of the death penalty in Japan, including Amnesty International, claim the capital punishment system is rife with human rights violations.

penalty. But they are vastly different.

In Japan, with much less violent crime to begin with, death is a rare sentence. There are currently 62 condemned prisoners here, and only two have been executed this year. In the United States, 3,774 prisoners were on death row as of the end of last year and 65 were executed.

What also separates the two is the thick wall of secrecy hiding the Japanese system.

Death row inmates are carefully isolated from the general prison population.

To avoid public debate, executions are not carried out when Parliament is in session and are timed to coincide with the departure of the justice minister who is-

sued the execution order. Daizo Nizawa, for example, was replaced in a Cabinet reshuffle 10 days after Takuma was hanged.

The fact of execution is kept secret from even the prisoner until about an hour beforehand, and there are no last-minute appeals, no final good-byes. Officials refuse to confirm to the media the names of those hanged. The information has to come from the families or lawyers.

She married him in prison, and when word got out, she was deluged by hate mail and threats. Although these have subsided, she still insists on being identified only as Mrs. Takuma, even though she never adopted her husband's name legally. A three-hour

interview in her lawyer's office was her first since the hanging.

She wasn't an activist for or against the death penalty, she said, but, like most of Japan, had followed Takuma's trial on the news and was bewildered by his cruelty.

She decided she wanted to get to know him.

She wed Takuma primarily because under prison rules that was the only way they could meet face-to-face. She took care of the paperwork and the two were married last December. They met for the first time on Jan. 13.

"My first feeling was simply fear," she said. "He was a murderer. Often, he would just talk nonsense."

She said he was like a child who obstinately refuses to apologize just to spite the adults around him. She had hoped that in time, she could change that, to make him feel that someone cared for him and thus arouse in him feelings of compassion for others. She never did.

Opponents of the death penalty in Japan — including Amnesty International, which protested Takuma's execution as too hasty — claim the capital punishment system is rife with human rights violations.

"The protection of human rights in Japanese prisons in general has deteriorated severely," said opposition party member Nobuto Hosaka, who led a group of Parliament members on an inspection of the gallows at Tokyo's prison last summer, the first allowed since the 1970s. "It's a hidden world."

Still, polls indicate most Japanese support the status quo. And Takuma, 40 at the time of his death, was no poster boy for the abolition movement.

Takuma had done time for sexual assault. He was a high-school dropout and had trouble keeping a job. One of his four former spouses accused him of stalking her. His mother was institutionalized, his brother had killed himself long before the murders, and his father had disowned him already before the murders.

But, most of all, Takuma showed no remorse.

After his hanging, Mrs. Takuma tried to apologize to the families of his victims. They refused to meet her.

"When he died he was unrepentant," she said. "But maybe in five years, or 10. I wish I had had more time."

Education

Focus

In Sunday
Scene,
this Sunday



IN THE STATES

Time to overhaul Social Security, Bush says

BY LEIGH STROPE

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Bush said Thursday that "now is the time to confront Social Security" to deal with a projected \$3.7 trillion, 75-year shortfall and give younger workers the ability to invest some of their contributions into personal accounts.

Bush also promised to send Congress "a tough budget" early next year. To the deficit line on federal spending. "If the hold is an issue, which it is, it's going to require some tough choices on the spending side," the president told a White House economic conference.

The president credited his tax-cutting

policies with reviving the economy. Bush said his strategy will be "to grow the economy with reasonable tax policy but to make sure the deficit is dealt with by being wise about how we spend money."

"It's not going to be easy," Bush said. "It turns out [congressional] appropriators take their title seriously."

Bush said that dealing with Social Security would be a top priority. All participants on Thursday's panel, including financial service firm officials, supported Bush's Social Security plans.

AFL-CIO President John Sweeney said Wall Street's support for partial privatization was a conflict of interest, calling it "a risky scheme for America, but a sure bet for the financial services industry."

Sweeney urged the Securities Industry Association to disavow Bush's planned overhaul. "Will the financial services industry behave as professionals with a duty to speak candidly to the investing public, or will elements of the industry once again seek to make money at the expense of their customers, only this time on a much grander scale?" Sweeney asked in a letter.

Bush was not specific about his own ideas for solving the problem, but laid out a few do-or-die principles.

He said that for an undefined group of seniors "nothing will change" in their benefit structure, that there should be no increase in payroll taxes and that younger workers should be moved toward private accounts for some portion of their Social Security contributions.

The audience chuckled as Bush wrapped up his list of requirements by adding, "With those principles in mind, I'm open-minded with the members of Congress."

Bush said there are more Americans who have no confidence they will ever see any Social Security benefits than people who are worried their current checks will stop coming.

"I think Congress needs to understand that," he said.

Democrats say supporters of personal accounts are exaggerating Social Security's funding problem.

In 2018, the system starts paying out more in benefits than it collects in taxes. In 2042, the system will be able to cover 73 percent of promised benefits, according to Social Security's trustees.

Newark airport screeners lose fake bomb in test

BY WAYNE PARRY

The Associated Press

NEWARK, N.J. — Baggage screeners at Newark Liberty International Airport spotted — and then lost — a fake bomb planted in luggage by a supervisor during a training exercise.

Despite an hours-long search Tuesday night, the bag, containing a fake bomb complete with wires, a detonator and a clock, made it onto an Amsterdam-bound flight. It was recovered by Dutch airport security officials when the flight landed.

"This really underscores the importance of the TSA's ongoing training exercises," said Ann Davis, a spokeswoman for the Transportation Security Administration, the agency responsible for screening passengers and baggage for weapons and explosives. "At no time did the bag pose a threat and at no time was anyone in danger."

Earlier this month, French authorities lost a bag containing real explosives that were being used to train bomb-sniffing dogs. That led French authorities to prohibit using live explosives in future tests.

New Jersey Democratic Sen. Jon Corzine and Frank Lautenberg on Wednesday

wrote to TSA chief David Stone, calling the fake bomb loss "alarming" and asking for an investigation.

The Newark incident was only the latest embarrassment for screeners at one of the airports from which some of the Sept. 11, 2001, hijackers took off.

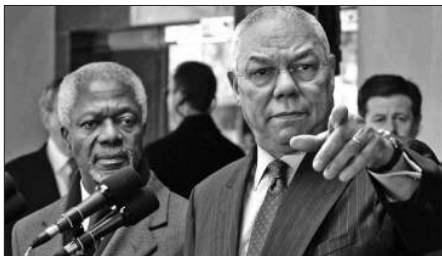
In October, The Star-Ledger of Newark reported screeners missed 11 in 4 fake explosives and weapons in secret weekly tests conducted throughout the summer by TSA agents.

In Tuesday night's test, a TSA supervisor secretly placed the bomb, which was designed to resemble the plastic explosive Semtex, inside a bag that was put through screening machines, Davis said.

A baggage screening machine sounded an alarm, but workers somehow lost track of the bag, which was then loaded onto a Continental Airlines flight.

No flights were delayed and the terminal remained open.

Davis said the TSA is still investigating how screeners lost track of the bag. "It was an error that the bag was not intercepted before it was loaded," she said, adding it was too soon to say if anyone would be disciplined.



Secretary of State Colin Powell, right, speaks to the media with U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan after the two met Thursday in Washington. AP

Annan, Powell discuss Iraq vote

BY ANNE GEARAN

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Secretary of State Colin Powell gave understated praise Thursday for preparations the United Nations is making to support elections in Iraq, and U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan said the world body will beef up its support if need be.

"The U.N. effort seems to be on track in support of the Iraqis as we fort" to hold nationwide elections to Jan. 30, Powell said after a State Department meeting with Annan.

Iraqis themselves "have the principal responsibility," Powell said.

Powell noted that the United Nations is taking the first steps to expand its presence in Iraq outside Baghdad to the cities of Basra and Irbil and has increased the number of election experts it will deploy in Iraq.

The United States has been pressing Annan to do more, and is unlikely to be satisfied with the current commitment of 25 election monitors.

"We have enough people in

there to do the work," Annan said. "And if need be, we'll put in the staff we need to get the work done. It's a question of what you need to get the job done."

Then Annan asked himself a question. "Are we doing the job? Yes, we are doing the job," he said.

The meeting with Powell was probably Annan's last before Powell leaves the job next year. White House national security adviser Condoleezza Rice will replace Powell, and Annan met with her at the White House later Thursday.

SUBSCRIBE ONLINE

Visit www.stripes.com and click on Home Delivery to get started

Your Hometown Newspaper

STARS & STRIPES

www.stripes.com

Chevy Chase bashes Bush in foul rant during awards

BY RICHARD LEIBY
The Washington Post

WASHINGTON — Even certified Hollywood liberals were reeling after Chevy Chase's potty-mouthed Bush-bashing Tuesday night at the Kennedy Center, where the actor hosted an awards ceremony staged by People for the American Way.

For most of the evening, Chase was his usual comedic self, delivering lines such as "This just in: resignations in the upper echelon of the Bush administration. The Bush sisters have been assigned and are being replaced by Paris and Nicky Hilton. Back for more news later."

After actors Alec Baldwin and Susan Sarandon delivered speeches accepting their Defender of Democracy awards, Chase took the stage a final time and unleashed a rant against President Bush that

stunned the crowd. He deployed the four-letter word that got Vice President Dick Cheney in hot water, using it as a noun. Chase called the prez a "dumb [expletive]." He also used it as an adjective, assuring the audience, "I'm no [expletive] clown either. ... This guy started a jihad."

Chase also said: "This guy in office is an uneducated, real lying schmuck ... and we still couldn't beat him with a bore like Kerry."

People for the American Way distanced itself Wednesday from the actor's rant. "Chevy Chase's improvised remarks caught everyone off guard, and were inappropriate and offensive," Ralph Neas, the liberal advocacy group's president, said in a statement. "It was not what I would have said, and certainly not the language People for the American Way would ever use in dis-

cussing any president of the United States."

Founder Norman Lear agreed: "I thought it was utterly untoward, obviously unexpected and unscripted and all that stuff. And, uh — it was Chevy Chase. He'll live with it, I won't."

Sen. Tom Daschle, the former minority leader, looked taken aback when he went on directly after Chase.

His opening line: "I've had to follow a lot of speakers, but ..."

The movie star didn't return for a curtain call or to savor dessert at the reception after the event. We were told he hurt his back and needed to call it a night by 9.

Meanwhile, the other host of the evening, the newly blond Cynthia Nixon, told us she had a more gracious message for Bush: "Don't just listen to people who are telling you yes, listen to the people who are telling you no!"



Administrator of operations Tony Reissig checks recounted ballots Wednesday at the Hamilton County Board of Elections in Cincinnati.

The count goes on

November ballots re-examined in Ohio

BY JOHN NOLAN
The Associated Press

CINCINNATI — In a scene reminiscent of Florida circa 2000, two teams of Republican and Democratic election workers held punch-card ballots up to the light and whispered back and forth as they tried to divine the voters' intent from a few hanging chads.

Observers for the presidential campaigns of John Kerry, President Bush and Green Party candidate David Cobb kept watch from chairs a few feet away.

The scene is being repeated statewide this week in a recount in the state that put Bush over the top in the election last month.

Officially, Bush beat Kerry by 119,000 votes in Ohio, but two third-party candidates collected the required \$13,600 for a recount they claim will show serious irregularities. The Kerry campaign is supporting the recount, though it has acknowledged it will not change the outcome.

The recounts began this week. At least 35 of Ohio's 88 counties had completed their recounts or were starting Wednesday, accord-

ing to a survey by The Associated Press. Some of the tallies will not be complete until next week.

"It takes a lot of work, a lot of hours," said Kerry campaign observer Jeannette Harrison, 63, a real estate agent. "This is a job that has to be done."

In Cincinnati, the Hamilton County workers gathered in concentration as they examined the ballot holes up close — a scene that called to mind the five weeks of recounts in Florida that made the terms "pregnant chad" and "butterfly ballot" famous.

Statewide, about 92,000 ballots cast in last month's presidential election failed to record a vote for president, most of them on punch-card systems.

Hamilton County workers wrote their results on tally sheets as they counted ballots from 30 precincts randomly selected from the county's 1,013.

Under Ohio law, workers must hand-count 3 percent of ballots. If the results match the certified results exactly, all other ballots can be recounted by machine. If the totals are off, all ballots must be counted by hand, adding days or weeks to the process.

IT'S FREE!!!

Your
photos
appear
here!

Create Your Own 2005 Desktop Calendar!

KEY FEATURES:

- Customize using your own family snapshots. A new photo appears each month.
- Send by email to family and friends around the world. Makes a perfect Christmas gift!
- Keep track of birthdays, anniversaries and appointments using the built-in Daily Planner.
- Just in time for Christmas.

To get your free desktop calendar, just go to www.Stripes.com and click the Stripes Club link at the top of the page.

Note: This Digital Calendar software is for personal use only and is not authorized for use on government computers.

Your Hometown Newspaper
STARS & STRIPES
www.stripes.com

Kerry campaign manager admits downplaying ads

The Associated Press

CAMBRIDGE, Mass. — The campaign manager for Sen. John Kerry's failed presidential bid said she regrets underestimating the impact of an attack advertisement that questioned Kerry's Vietnam War record.

Mary Beth Cahill, who spoke Wednesday at Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government with Ken Mehlman, President Bush's campaign manager, said the Massachusetts senator's campaign initially thought there would be "no reach" to the ad

from Swift Boat Veterans for Truth.

Instead, the ad, which initially aired in just three states, became a central issue of the campaign, eventually forcing Kerry to personally deny the group's allegations that he did not deserve his combat medals.

"This is the best \$40,000 investment made by any political group, but it was only because of the news coverage that it got where it did," she said.

"In hindsight, maybe we should have put Sen. Kerry out earlier, perhaps we could have cut it off earlier."

Health benefits of birth control pill disputed

By MARILYNN MARCHIONE

The Associated Press

MILWAUKEE — A study concluding that birth control pills slightly lowered the risk of heart disease has now been called into question by U.S. officials who say it was flawed and wasn't properly reviewed before it was presented at a major medical meeting in October.

Doctors from Wayne State University in Detroit had presented two studies at a reproductive medicine meeting in Philadelphia claiming that oral contraceptives lowered heart risks and did not increase the risk of breast cancer.

That got a lot of attention because the conclusions were opposite what previous studies had found. The new infor-

mation also came from the largest women's health study ever done in the United States.

But on Wednesday, Dr. Barbara Alving of the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute, which funds and oversees the national study, said these particular analyses hadn't been properly reviewed, and that a new analysis by senior statisticians had determined that the heart findings were flawed.

Once age and other factors were considered, they "could not find a relationship" between pill use and heart disease, Alving said. The breast cancer findings also are suspect now, she said.

The research was from the Women's Health Initiative, best known for its landmark finding in 2002 that taking

hormones after menopause raised the risk of certain cancers and heart problems.

But it is not the best kind of study for determining risks of oral contraceptives, Alving said.

That's because it relies on women's memories of what drugs they used in previous years rather than actual hospital or medical records.

Previous studies that were more scientifically sound have found that pill-users have a small increased risk of blood clots, heart attacks and stroke, she said. The Detroit researchers reported a small benefit — pill users reportedly had 8 percent less risk of cardiovascular disease and 7 percent less risk of developing any form of cancer.

Gore's mother dies

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — Pauline Gore, whose son Al became vice president and nearly captured the presidency and whose husband had a long and distinguished career in Congress, died Wednesday. She was 92.

She had been weakened by strokes and a heart attack, and died in her home in Carthage.

Trained as a lawyer, Pauline Gore was a familiar figure on the campaign trails of her husband, Albert Gore Sr., who served as former Vice President Al Gore Jr. She played a central role in shaping her husband's campaign strategy. Gore Sr. was a liberal Democrat who served in the House from 1939 to 1953 and in the Senate from 1953 to 1970 and aspired to the presidency himself. He died in 1998.

Al Gore Jr. is the Gores' only living child. Their daughter, Nancy, died of cancer in 1984. Other survivors include a brother, Whit LaFon of Jackson, grandchildren and great-grandchildren. The funeral will be Saturday in Carthage.

Insomnia drug OK'd

WASHINGTON — The Food and Drug Administration on Wednesday approved a new drug for people with insomnia.

The agency approved the sale of Lunesta, made by the pharmaceutical company Sepracor, for both chronic and occasional insomnia, a problem for millions of people. The drug, taken as a pill, is non-narcotic, the company says, and helps people remain asleep all night, not just fall asleep.

Arms ban up for vote

SAN FRANCISCO — City residents will vote next year on a proposed weapons ban that would deny handguns to anyone except law enforcement officers, members of the military and security guards.

It passed in November, residents have now 90 days to give up firearms they keep in their homes or businesses. The proposal was immediately dismissed as illegal by a gun owners group.

From The Associated Press



Andy Guiding Young Cloud, second right, joins other Tongva dancers to give blessings to a herd of approximately 100 buffalo on Santa Catalina Island in Avalon, Calif. The buffalo were repatriated to South Dakota.

Buffalo go home to roam

The Associated Press

SANTA CATALINA ISLAND, Calif. — After a life spent on a balmy Pacific island, 98 buffalo are being sent back to an authentic — and frigid — home on the range. The buffalo began their journey Wednesday from Santa Catalina Island, off the coast of Southern California, to South Dakota, where they'll live on traditional ranchlands of the Rosebud Lakota reservation.

The animals, some standing 5 feet at the shoulder and weighing several thousand pounds, are the descendants of an original herd of 14 brought from the prairie to appear in the 1920s silent movie "The Vanishing American." Once the film was completed, the buffalo were simply left behind on the island.

The idea was to get these buffalo that were taken from the plains

some 80 years ago... back to their homeland," said Maurice Lyons, chairman of the Morongo Band of Mission Indians, which is paying the \$75,000 cost to ship the animals.

"To the Native Americans back there, these animals are sacred," he said. "It was very moving. They'll be going home to their relatives." After being lured into pens with hay, the buffalo were herded onto two, 18-wheeled trucks, and then taken by barge the 24 miles across the sea to Long Beach.

From there, it was on to the reservation where a thousand miles inland, where the animals were to arrive Thursday night.

The Lakota reservation already has buffalo, and the conservancy said there shouldn't be any problems with the newcomers acclimating, despite the fact that they'll be moving to a place with subzero winters.

Politics is no longer big man on campus

By KRISTEN WYATT

The Associated Press

ATLANTA — The College Republicans at Emory University need a new meeting room. A smaller one.

They used to draw 50 or 60 students to adrenaline-fueled campus meetings, when the presidential election was just around the corner and first-time voters were pumped to get involved.

Now, with the election over, a couple dozen Emory Republicans gathered on the Atlanta campus for a pre-finals pizza party. Like politically mad college students everywhere, they're wondering how to keep membership up without the excitement of a presidential race.

At Emory, that sales pitch includes pizza parties, speakers, a chance to hone debate skills — even an unofficial matchmaker role. "It's a good place to meet people that think similarly as you do, a good place for camaraderie," said senior Lauren Daugherty, chairwoman of Emory College Republicans who saw dues spike the election year.

But drop-off is inevitable. After all, many of the college students were voting for the first time and aren't used to working for political parties. And the most-active student volunteers also were more likely than their older colleagues to need a breather after the election.

Take 18-year-old Hank Clay. The University of Georgia student used to be president of a Young Democrats club at his junior college. He worked tirelessly before he was even old enough to

vote. But he took last month's loss hard and is taking a break from his campus Democratic group.

"I pretty much went into depression for a couple weeks," he said. "I'm still having a little bit of that. That probably has resulted in a lack of motivation and frustration for a lot of people." Even the University of Georgia's College Republicans, the nation's largest chapter with more than 3,000 members, took a break after President Bush won re-election.

Some campus activists fear that students will now forget them, turning their attention to finals, then to winter break, and then to the spring semester, and then, well, they might just drop out of political activity altogether. At Dartmouth College, where membership in the College Republicans club doubled from 150 to 300 students this semester, club president Jesse Roisin is busy finding new activities to keep new members interested.

"The beautiful thing about an election is that it gets people involved emotionally. Now we have to work at it," Roisin said.

Maybe they could look to Valdosta State University in Valdosta, Ga., where campus Democrat and Republican clubs recently hosted a paintball game against each other. Or to Kansas State University, where the College Republicans are planning presidential inauguration parties.

At KSU in Manhattan, monthly meetings were increased to bi-weekly affairs during the run-up to the election, and finally this year to weekly meetings. Now drawing more than 60 people. Now the meeting schedule is being ratcheted back, and the Republicans are trying to act more like a social club.

Anger over Nativity removal leads to defeat of bond issue

By JULIE E. BISBEE

The Associated Press

MUSTANG, Okla. — Voters angered over a superintendent's decision to remove a Nativity scene from an elementary school Christmas program took out their anger at the ballot box, helping to defeat bond measures worth nearly \$11 million.

Tuesday's rejection of the two

measures — one of which would have paid for construction of an elementary school — marked the first time in more than a decade that voters in this bedroom community west of Oklahoma City denied additional funds for their school district.

The day before the election, dozens of parents at a school board meeting expressed outrage at Superintendent Karl Springer's

decision to end the school's tradition of closing the Christmas play with a manger scene. Both of the bond issues in Mustang received about 55 percent support, but 60 percent was needed for approval.

Concerned over the issue of separation of church and state, Springer had sought advice from the school board attorney, who recommended that the Nativity

scene be removed. The children still got to stage "Silent Night," but Springer took out the manger scene.

About 100 people protested outside the auditorium where the play was performed Thursday night. Some parents were angry that Santa Claus, a Christmas tree and symbols of Hanukkah and Kwanzaa were left in the production.



Washington Post

Shoppers look at the selection at Capitol Auto Auctions in Marlow Heights, Md., one of the companies that charities use to sell donated vehicles for them. A law that takes effect Jan. 1 limits the tax deduction donors may claim on vehicles valued at more than \$500, prompting a surge in year-end vehicle donations.

Car donations speeding up

Drivers scramble to beat Jan. 1 tax-law change for write-offs

BY JACQUELINE L. SALMON
The Washington Post

WASHINGTON — An impending law that will squeeze some of the tax benefits out of donating a vehicle to charity next year apparently is behind a holiday increase in car donations. Officials of nonprofit groups in the Washington area and elsewhere say they are seeing more car donations than usual as owners scramble to beat the legal change, which takes effect Jan. 1.

Vehicle Donation Processing Center Inc., a California group that handles such gifts for 300 charities nationwide, said donations are about 15 percent ahead of last year. Goodwill of Greater Washington has taken in 135 cars in the fourth quarter, already 10 percent more than in the last three months of 2003, it said.

The national headquarters of Volunteers of America said its car donations are running modestly ahead of last year, when car owners donated more than 80,000 vehicles. And the local chapter of the National Kidney Foundation has recorded a 5 percent increase in the number of donated cars compared with last year.

"We're expecting a big surge in

the last couple weeks of December," foundation spokeswoman Michele Anthony said.

The increase coincides with the passage of a corporate tax bill in October that will rein in tax write-offs for donated cars, boats, artwork and other big-ticket items in 2005.

Currently, people who give vehicles and other items to charity can deduct the fair market value when they calculate their taxes. But after complaints that the system was being abused by charities that auctioned the cars for far less than what was claimed by car donors, Congress cracked down.

Starting next year, the Internal Revenue Service will allow donors to deduct only the amount the charity receives for the sale of the vehicle if the price is more than \$500. Donors still will be able to claim fair market value for clunkers valued at less than \$500.

Some charities are using the looming change to prod donors into handing over their vehicles soon.

"Act fast! Tax deductibility of vehicle donations changes January 1, 2005," reads a solicitation

on the Web site of public radio station WAMU.

"We've been pushing [it]," said Wendy Feliz Sefsa, foundations relations manager for WAMU, which began its car donation program this year.

But whether such donations will decrease in 2005 is a matter of some dispute among charities. Some say they are braced for sharp declines, while others say they are confident that car owners will still flock to the programs despite the reduced tax benefits.

Volunteers of America, which runs homeless shelters and substance abuse programs and offers other social services for the poor nationwide, is braced for a 50 percent falloff in car donations next year, said Ron Field, vice president of public policy for the group, which made \$10 million on donated cars last year.

Other organizations say they hope the impact will be minimal.

"We're moving into the new year with every intention of continuing with the programs using much the same approach that we've had in the past," said Tom Roberts, director of development for Melwood, an Upper Marlboro, Md., charity for the mentally and physically disabled that takes in about 15,000 cars a year.

CC poll suggests link between good health, marriage

By RANDOLPH E. SCHMID
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Confirming what many couples already knew, a government study concludes it's healthy to be married.

Sure, the majority of husbands pack on some extra pounds. But overall, married people are sick less often and more active. They smoke and drink less and in general feel better than single, divorced, never married or even folks just living together.

The National Center for Health Statistics report didn't name the reasons why married people are healthier. But health statistician Charlotte Schoenborn in an interview described two major theories.

One is that marriage may be protective of health. For example, married couples may have advantages in terms of economic resources, social and psychological support and encouragement of healthy lifestyles.

A second possibility, she said, is marital selection — "the theory that healthy people get married and stay married, whereas less healthy people either do not marry or are more likely to be come separated, divorced or widowed."

The report was based on a survey of 127,545 people in 1990-2002 conducted by the center, part of the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Married people, however, are not immune to the weight problems plaguing America.

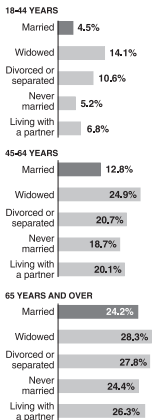
Currently more than half of all adults are overweight or obese — 56.7 percent — the center said.

Some 70.6 percent of husbands were overweight or obese compared with 65.1 percent of all men. For females, 48.6 percent of married women were overweight or obese, virtually the same as the 48.5 percent of women in general.

Healthfully married

Married adults tend to be healthier than divorced, widowed or never married adults, a new report from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention suggests.

Percentage of adults in fair or poor health by age and marital status, 1999-2002



NOTE: Fair or poor health status is based on the question, "Would you say (person's) health is excellent, very good, good or fair, or would you say (person's) health is poor?"

SOURCE: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Retiree gets probation in fight with 40-year-old man over foul language

The Associated Press

ST. PAUL, Minn. — A 79-year-old retiree who tussled with a man half his age over the man's foul language in a restaurant was sentenced to probation — but outside of that, he's been treated more like a hero than a criminal.

Bill Stevenson said the fracas began in July when he and another retired 30 engineer, 74-year-old Sten Gerfart, were having coffee at a bagel shop. In walked 40-year-old Jesse Tabor, talking on a cell phone and liberally using four-letter words, the men said.

Tabor said he didn't recall cursing. But Stevenson and Gerfart remember differently.

Gerfart tapped Tabor on the shoulder and asked

him to take his call outside, Stevenson said. But Tabor, who was with his 13-year-old daughter at the time, dismissed him. Stevenson said he got involved when Tabor continued to shout obscenities.

Stevenson grabbed the phone from Tabor and the two men engaged in a few seconds of tug-of-war. Thinking better of it, Stevenson said he let go and Tabor "went sailing across the floor."

Stevenson pleaded guilty to disorderly conduct Tuesday and was given three months of probation. But even the lawyers at Ramsey County District Court were giving him thumbs-up signs as he left the courtroom, he said.

"I've had over 30 calls and letters and e-mails, and I've not had one negative call. They're all on my side," Stevenson said.

Yokota International Christian Assembly
(Yokota Christian Center)
Located Just So. Of Supply Gate on RT. 16
1437 Kumagawa, Fussa city, Tokyo, 197-0003 Japan

"SHARING OUR LORD, OUR LOVE, OUR LIVES"

SUNDAY	Japanese Language Discipleship Class	9:00am	WEDNESDAY		
	Prayer & Sanctuary	10:30am		FAMILY Night	7:00 p.m.
	Worship Service	10:45am		Adult Bible Study	
	Children's Church (English, Japanese)	10:45am		Youth, Small Groups, and Missionaries.	
	Evening Service				
	Children's Sunday School			THURSDAY	8:00pm-10:00
	Youth Action Service			FRIDAY	
	Home Fellowship Groups (every 1st & 3rd Sunday)	1:00pm 6:00pm		"Come to the River"	
				Charismatic Service (3rd Friday of month)	
TUESDAY	Ladies Bible Study			SATURDAY	
	Ladies Night Out (2nd Tues of month)			Youth, Small Groups, Missionaries	8:30 a.m.
				Prayer Breakfast & Training	

Visit our Website at: www.yokotaica.org

CHURCH OFFICE 042-251-4772

HOME 042-251-4346

Email Church Yokotaica@yca.or.jp

Pastors: Rev. Wes & Carol Mathis
(returning Sept. 19, 2004)

FACES

Destiny's calling

Pop trio still together after taking time off for solo work

BY NEKESA MUMBI MOODY
The Associated Press

LOOKING back at breakups of some of the great pop groups, the beginning of the end can often be traced to two words: "solo project."

So when Beyoncé — already the magnet of Destiny's Child — catapulted to superstardom last year with her triple-platinum, Grammy-winning solo debut, "Dangerously In Love," many predicted the demise of the best-selling girl group.

The trio is happy to prove the skeptics wrong. Though Beyoncé's solo hits are still lingering on the charts and radio, Destiny's Child — Beyoncé, Kelly Rowland and Michelle Williams — have reunited for "Destiny Fulfilled," their first album in three years. With their new hit single, the sexy dance track "Lose My Breath," the women are picking up where they left off: on top of the charts.

"I feel wonderful being back. I know one thing that we really love is just the camaraderie all over again," says Rowland, as she

and her bandmates sprawl on oversized chairs in a hotel suite during a day of interviews and photo shoots.

While the album is being billed as a reunion, the women say they never stopped working as a unit — even during Beyoncé's break-out year.

"People said that they broke up, but we appeared at the BET Awards together! Destiny's Child still had appearances together that we did, and people kept saying, 'They ain't together! We're like, 'Jerk, you just saw us,' says Williams, as the group dissolves in laughter.

"Well, if we broke up, we were still friends!"

Friendship aside, critics are still pondering why the group decided to regroup, given the diverging interests of each member.

Rowland has had moderate success with acting and her own solo debut, 2002's "Simply Deep"; Williams released two gospel albums and starred in Broadway's "Aida."

So why release another Destiny's Child album? "Well, why not?" retorts Beyoncé — pleasant, but still peeved at the suggestion.

"I mean, Destiny's Child has sold millions of records, had so much success, and it goes far beyond the success we had as a group. We're friends, and we made a commitment to each other. We made a commitment to our fans. And we were all looking forward to it."

There's no denying Destiny's Child's success. Since their 1997 debut, they became one of the best-selling girl groups of all time, racking up numerous hits, including "Say My Name," "Independent Women (Part II)" and "Boyz n the City."

What's most clear now is their development into young women. On "Destiny Fulfilled," their earlier sexy-but-innocent tone has disappeared. The first single talks about a guy that can't keep up in bed, and other songs have a sexual, but not graphic, tone.

"It touches on a more sensual side of Destiny's Child because we never talked about that. Now that we're older, we're more comfortable with it," says Beyoncé.

Besides sex, there's also an emphasis this time around on group parity. Beyoncé is no longer the focal point visually — she's rarely



Members of the music group Destiny's Child pose at the Rhigra Royal Hotel in New York last month. From left are Beyoncé Knowles, Michelle Williams and Kelly Rowland.

photographed now in the middle, like the old days. And while Beyoncé's reputation as an emerging musical wunderkind continues — she was a writer-producer not only on her own album, but 2001's "Survivor" — she's brags that comrades are branching out musically as well.

"Now, they're so much more comfortable, and they're not

afraid to hum the melody that it's in their head, or say the lyrics or whatever is coming in their head, which before they were way more shy about it," says Beyoncé, beaming like a mother hen. "They've just blossomed. It's almost like different people. It took us kind of being away from each other and having to really focus on ourselves individually to grow."

Dude looks like a granddad

Steven Tyler is now, gasp, a grandfather.

Liv Tyler, daughter of the Aerosmith lead singer and model Bebe Buell, gave birth to a son in Manhattan on Tuesday, *Us Weekly* magazine reported.

"They are both doing great," Tyler's publicist, Stephen Huvane, said Wednesday. He said the baby hadn't yet been named.

The 27-year-old actress is married to Royston Langdon of the band Spacehog. The two tied the knot in March 2003.

Tyler played the elf princess Arwen in "The Lord of the Rings" trilogy. Her screen credits also include "Jersey Girl" and "Armageddon."

Houston has an auto accident

Singer Whitney Houston rear-ended an Alphareta, Ga., city bus in with her sports car, but no one was hurt, police said.

The accident happened Wednesday afternoon as Houston was making a left turn, said Sgt. Chris Lagerboom.

The bus sustained minor damage. The bumper of Houston's Porsche was mangled but the singer was not injured.

She was given a citation for failure to yield, a misdemeanor.

Houston lives with her husband, R&B singer Bobby Brown, near the suburb of Alphareta, about 25 miles north of Atlanta.

Kournikova quite possibly married

Is the knot really tied this time?

Anna Kournikova and Enrique Iglesias were married in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico, a few weeks ago, *Us Weekly* magazine reports.

"Everything is awesome. We are married," the magazine quotes Kournikova as saying at a charity tennis event in Florida on Sunday.

Ivy Mollenkamp, Kournikova's publicist, refused Tuesday to confirm or deny the *Us Weekly* story, saying, "We never comment on her personal life." Iglesias' representative, Stacy Bonello, also had no comment.

Court officials in charge of registering marriages in Puerto Vallarta and neighboring Nuevo Vallarta said they had no record of such a wedding. But the former tennis pro and the Latin pop star could have had a religious wedding, which would not be legally recognized in Mexico.



Iglesias and Kournikova



JUST IN TIME FOR THE HOLIDAYS!

High Phone Bills are now Officially Obsolete!
Unlimited Flat Rate International Calling.

FEATURED SERVICES
 U.S. phone number with choice of area code.

Caller ID, Call Waiting ID, Voice Mail, Three Way Calling, Call Forwarding
 Get more information by calling Dina @ 227-3318
 or www.freedomcom.com/callglobal

Global Connect US Plus \$39⁹⁹ per month

U.S. including Alaska and Hawaii

Canada

U.S. including English, Spanish & French

Global Connect US Plus \$59⁹⁹ per month

U.S.A. including Alaska and Hawaii

Canada

U.S. including English, Spanish & French

France

Germany

Switzerland

Italy

Japan

South Korea

Spain

Sweden

Thailand

U.K.

Mexico

Mexico

Global Connect US Plus includes
 Global Connect Direct plus unlimited incoming and outgoing calls to anyone in the U.S.A., Canada, & the U.K. for \$39.95 per month

Global Connect US Plus includes
 Global Connect Direct plus unlimited incoming and outgoing calls to anyone in the U.S.A., Canada, U.K., France, Italy, Germany, Switzerland, Netherlands, Malaysia, Singapore, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Mexico City Mexico & Guadalajara Mexico for \$59.95 per month.

YOUR MONEY

FCC to allow Internet access on airlines

BY GENARO C. ARMAS

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Federal regulators voted Wednesday to give airline passengers high-speed Internet connections while they fly.

The unanimous vote by the Federal Communications Commission means air travelers could be surfing the Web by 2006.

"If there is a theme for this meeting, it is that we want [new technologies] on the land, in the air, and on the sea," FCC Chairman Michael Powell said. "We are pushing the frontiers in order to bring the information age to all corners of the world."

The FCC also voted to solicit comments from the public about ending the ban on in-flight use of cell phones. Among the issues to consider are whether passengers want to be surrounded by cell phone conversations.

"The ability to communicate is a vital one, but good cell phone etiquette is also essential," Commissioner Jonathan Adelstein said. "Our job is to see if this is possible and then let consumers work out the etiquette."

David Stempier, president of the Air Travelers Association, a passenger advocacy group, said allowing Internet access would "make business travelers more efficient and while away the time for a lot of other passengers. This is all the wave of the future here."

Currently, the only way passengers on domestic flights can communicate with the ground is through phones usually built into the seat backs. That service isn't very popular: It costs far more than conventional or cell phones — about

Fliers fear cell phone babble

The Washington Post

WASHINGTON — Airline passengers already are beginning to brace for the eventual introduction of cell phones on commercial flights. Listen to Richard Archambault, an architect from Schaumburg, Ill., who wants to plug his ears against the expected yelling into bulky receivers.

"People who don't hesitate to talk in restaurants or other taboo venues will take their disrespectful attitudes with them to the skies and turn a once-quiet place of refuge into a noisy, office-like environment to the detriment of all," Archambault said.

The new wave of complaints comes as the Federal Communications Commission on Wednesday begins a review of the 20-year-old rule prohibiting cell phone chatter at 30,000 feet. The commission will seek to determine whether recent advances in technology relieve earlier concerns about the use of cell phones about airlines.

\$3.99 a minute — and the reception often is poor.

Of the three companies that initially offer that service on commercial jets, only Verizon Airfone remains. It has phones on about 1,500 jets.

The FCC approved a measure to restructure how frequencies for such "air-to-ground" services are used and allow the airlines to offer wireless high-speed Internet connections.

The FCC also will solicit passengers' opinions. In the next week or so, travelers can voice their views through the agency's Web site, www.fcc.gov. Information can be found on the site under "Filing Public Comments."

Still, travelers' worst fears of nonstop, transatlantic chatter won't be realized for years at least. Both the FCC and the Federal Aviation Administration must approve the use of cell phones in airline cabins. If the FCC rules in favor of a change, the FAA still isn't likely to seriously begin grappling with the question until 2006, pending results of its own studies.

In its review, the FCC will address whether cell phones used on airlines are a problem for communications on the ground.

The FCC also is expected to study ways to introduce more price competition among companies that offer telephone and high-speed Internet services from the sky.

Left undecided was the issue of how many companies the FCC would allow, through an auction, to offer such services. Verizon Airfone maintains that letting one company handle the service would ensure the best quality.

Others, including Boeing Co. and Air Cell, argue for two competitors to prevent one company from having a monopoly. FCC officials said the auction would take place within a year.

Once plans are completed and planes outfitted with the equipment, high-speed Internet access might be found on commercial domestic flights by 2006, said Jack Blumenstein, chairman and CEO of Louisville, Colo.-based AirCell.

The time line of when air travelers would be able to start using cell phones in flight is murkier, in part because both the FCC and the Federal Aviation Administration set the practice.

The FCC took up the issue Wednesday in an effort to start public discussion, and commissioners might eventually reach the rules or lift the ban entirely. Of most concern to FCC officials is how using a cell phone in an airplane would interfere with cell phone use on the ground.

The FAA concern is over whether airborne cell phones could interfere with a plane's navigation and electrical systems, agency spokeswoman Laura Brown said. The technologies used on seat-back phones and being considered for use for wireless Internet hookups cause no such interference.

The FAA has commissioned a private, independent firm to study the issue. Results aren't due until 2006. The FAA will not make its decision on cell phone use until after the study is completed, Brown said.

Allowing high-speed Internet access and cell phone use on planes could offer cash-strapped airline companies a new source for revenues, said Doug Wills, spokesman for the Air Transport Association, the major airlines' trade group.

Still, airlines must weigh the demand for such service against the desire of other passengers for a quiet cabin, Wills said.

"Some people see a cell-free environment as a good thing," he said.

WEDNESDAY'S MARKET SUMMARY

INDEXES

52-week High	Low	Name	Last	Net Chg	% Chg	YTD Chg	52-week High
10,753.51	9,700.49	Dow Jones Industrial	10,601.45	+15.00	+0.14	+7.57	+1.50
3,758.41	2,743.46	Dow Jones Transportation	3,739.61	+0.77	+0.02	+25.83	+26.74
135.30	254.11	Dow Jones Utilities	327.97	+2.77	+0.85	+2.88	+2.32
7,139.92	6,171.85	NASDAQ Composite	7,159.65	+35.04	+0.49	+11.77	+15.18
AMEX	1,111.88	AMEX Index	1,157.90	+11.55	+0.92	+1.64	+2.31
2,164.63	1,759.82	Nasdaq Composite	2,165.25	+2.11	+0.10	+9.95	+12.55
1,205.29	1,060.77	S&P 500	1,207.87	+2.34	+0.19	+4.44	+12.81
46.83	545.29	S&P MidCap	650.80	+4.07	+0.62	+13.87	+17.10
544.84	515.59	Russell 2000	548.61	+0.87	+0.16	+7.19	+16.42
11,791.70	76,264.52	DJ Wilshire World	11,861.09	+2.37	+0.02	+1.03	+1.66

NYSE

Most Active (\$1 OR MORE)				Most Active (\$1 OR MORE)				Most Active (\$1 OR MORE)			
Name	Vol	(00)	Last	Name	Vol	(00)	Last	Name	Vol	(00)	Last
Lucient	739153	3.60	-04	SPDR	446674	120.88	+09	SeriesU	1056231	7.65	-30
SPY/ENF	689180	24.02	-18	SemiTru1	20818	33.34	-05	Microsoft	978823	27.11	-12
NorthernE	689180	24.02	-18	SPDR	446674	120.88	+09	SeriesU	1056231	7.65	-30
Pfizer	41834	20.32	-99	ISHares	68584	10.25	+05	Microsoft10Y	108307	14.09	-14
Hilton	336651	22.11	+27	SP Energy	53078	36.56	+27	Crude	72917	14.09	-14
Wells	30170	3.90	+06	SP500	52072	129.34	+10	Crude	71788	21.14	-18
TimeWar	32389	19.38	-19	SP Health	43840	3.33	+02	Orisco	456666	19.12	+12
LVShares	262310	16.56	-11	IVaCapC	32213	29.53	+09	SanMicro	386352	5.04	+06
Motors	216764	6.96	-11	BernaldGold	26292	3.17	+11	ChartWell	173315	2.08	+05
North	216764	6.96	-11	SP500	52072	129.34	+10	ChartWell	173315	2.08	+05

KEY DEFENSE STOCKS

Name	Vol	DE	FE	LA	YTD
Boeing	10	67.11	-0.10	-0.15	
Boeing	10	67.11	-0.10	-0.15	
Boeing	10	67.11	-0.10	-0.15	
Boeing	10	67.11	-0.10	-0.15	
Boeing	10	67.11	-0.10	-0.15	
Boeing	10	67.11	-0.10	-0.15	
Boeing	10	67.11	-0.10	-0.15	
Boeing	10	67.11	-0.10	-0.15	
Boeing	10	67.11	-0.10	-0.15	
Boeing	10	67.11	-0.10	-0.15	

KEY MUTUAL FUNDS

Name	NAV	NAV	NAV	YTD
Fidelity Investor	38.54	+2.34	+6.13	
Fidelity Investor	38.54	+2.34	+6.13	
Fidelity Investor	38.54	+2.34	+6.13	
Fidelity Investor	38.54	+2.34	+6.13	
Fidelity Investor	38.54	+2.34	+6.13	
Fidelity Investor	38.54	+2.34	+6.13	
Fidelity Investor	38.54	+2.34	+6.13	
Fidelity Investor	38.54	+2.34	+6.13	
Fidelity Investor	38.54	+2.34	+6.13	
Fidelity Investor	38.54	+2.34	+6.13	

EXCHANGE RATES

Military rates	
Japanese yen (Dec. 17)	103.00
South Korean won (Dec. 16)	1,035.00
Euro costs (Dec. 16)	1.3137
Dollar costs (Dec. 16)	0.7283
British pound (Dec. 17)	0.5200
Commercial rates	
Bahrian (Dollar)	0.37
British pound	\$1.9283
Canada (Dollar)	1.2259
Denmark (Krone)	5.5555
Euro (Euro)	6.2252
Hong Kong (Dollar)	\$1.3307
India (Rupee)	7.7474
Indonesia (Rupiah)	184.34
Iceland (Krona)	1.3307
Japan (Yen)	4.3224
Korea (Won)	0.0074
Kuwait (Dinar)	1.0242
Malaysia (Ringgit)	0.6189
Philippines (Peso)	0.0144
Saudi Arabia (Riyal)	3.7500
Singapore (Dollar)	0.6962
South Korea (Won)	1.0628
Switzerland (Franc)	1.4400
Taiwan (Dollar)	1.4400
Thailand (Baht)	1.4400
Turkey (Lira)	1.428,571.00
Military exchange rates	
Military exchange rates are available to customers at military banks and facilities in the country of issuance.	
Military exchange rates are available to customers at military banks and facilities in the country of issuance.	
Military exchange rates are available to customers at military banks and facilities in the country of issuance.	
Military exchange rates are available to customers at military banks and facilities in the country of issuance.	
Military exchange rates are available to customers at military banks and facilities in the country of issuance.	
Military exchange rates are available to customers at military banks and facilities in the country of issuance.	
Military exchange rates are available to customers at military banks and facilities in the country of issuance.	
Military exchange rates are available to customers at military banks and facilities in the country of issuance.	
Military exchange rates are available to customers at military banks and facilities in the country of issuance.	
Military exchange rates are available to customers at military banks and facilities in the country of issuance.	
Military exchange rates are available to customers at military banks and facilities in the country of issuance.	
Military exchange rates are available to customers at military banks and facilities in the country of issuance.	
Military exchange rates are available to customers at military banks and facilities in the country of issuance.	
Military exchange rates are available to customers at military banks and facilities in the country of issuance.	
Military exchange rates are available to customers at military banks and facilities in the country of issuance.	
Military exchange rates are available to customers at military banks and facilities in the country of issuance.	
Military exchange rates are available to customers at military banks and facilities in the country of issuance.	
Military exchange rates are available to customers at military banks and facilities in the country of issuance.	
Military exchange rates are available to customers at military banks and facilities in the country of issuance.	
Military exchange rates are available to customers at military banks and facilities in the country of issuance.	
Military exchange rates are available to customers at military banks and facilities in the country of issuance.	
Military exchange rates are available to customers at military banks and facilities in the country of issuance.	
Military exchange rates are available to customers at military banks and facilities in the country of issuance.	
Military exchange rates are available to customers at military banks and facilities in the country of issuance.	
Military exchange rates are available to customers at military banks and facilities in the country of issuance.	
Military exchange rates are available to customers at military banks and facilities in the country of issuance.	
Military exchange rates are available to customers at military banks and facilities in the country of issuance.	
Military exchange rates are available to customers at military banks and facilities in the country of issuance.	
Military exchange rates are available to customers at military banks and facilities in the country of issuance.	
Military exchange rates are available to customers at military banks and facilities in the country of issuance.	
Military exchange rates are available to customers at military banks and facilities in the country of issuance.	
Military exchange rates are available to customers at military banks and facilities in the country of issuance.	
Military exchange rates are available to customers at military banks and facilities in the country of issuance.	
Military exchange rates are available to customers at military banks and facilities in the country of issuance.	
Military exchange rates are available to customers at military banks and facilities in the country of issuance.	
Military exchange rates are available to customers at military banks and facilities in the country of issuance.	
Military exchange rates are available to customers at military banks and facilities in the country of issuance.	
Military exchange rates are available to customers at military banks and facilities in the country of issuance.	
Military exchange rates are available to customers at military banks and facilities in the country of issuance.	
Military exchange rates are available to customers at military banks and facilities in the country of issuance.	
Military exchange rates are available to customers at military banks and facilities in the country of issuance.	
Military exchange rates are available to customers at military banks and facilities in the country of issuance.	
Military exchange rates are available to customers at military banks and facilities in the country of issuance.	
Military exchange rates are available to customers at military banks and facilities in the country of issuance.	
Military exchange rates are available to customers at military banks and facilities in the country of issuance.	
Military exchange rates are available to customers at military banks and facilities in the country of issuance.	
Military exchange rates are available to customers at military banks and facilities in the country of issuance.	
Military exchange rates are available to customers at military banks and facilities in the country of issuance.	
Military exchange rates are available to customers at military banks and facilities in the country of issuance.	
Military exchange rates are available to customers at military banks and facilities in the country of issuance.	
Military exchange rates are available to customers at military banks and facilities in the country of issuance.	
Military exchange rates are available to customers at military banks and facilities in the country of issuance.	
Military exchange rates are available to customers at military banks and facilities in the country of issuance.	
Military exchange rates are available to customers at military banks and facilities in the country of issuance.	
Military exchange rates are available to customers at military banks and facilities in the country of issuance.	
Military exchange rates are available to customers at military banks and facilities in the country of issuance.	
Military exchange rates are available to customers at military banks and facilities in the country of issuance.	
Military exchange rates are available to customers at military banks and facilities in the country of issuance.	
Military exchange rates are available to customers at military banks and facilities in the country of issuance.	
Military exchange rates are available to customers at military banks and facilities in the country of issuance.	
Military exchange rates are available to customers at military banks and facilities in the country of issuance.	
Military exchange rates are available to customers at military banks and facilities in the country of issuance.	
Military exchange rates are available to customers at military banks and facilities in the country of issuance.	
Military exchange rates are available to customers at military banks and facilities in the country of issuance.	
Military exchange rates are available to customers at military banks and facilities in the country of issuance.	
Military exchange rates are available to customers at military banks and facilities in the country of issuance.	
Military exchange rates are available to customers at military banks and facilities in the country of issuance.	
Military exchange rates are available to customers at military banks and facilities in the country of issuance.	
Military exchange rates are available to customers at military banks and facilities in the country of issuance.	
Military exchange rates are available to customers at military banks and facilities in the country of issuance.	
Military exchange rates are available to customers at military banks and facilities in the country of issuance.	
Military exchange rates are available to customers at military banks and facilities in the country of issuance.	
Military exchange rates are available to customers at military banks and facilities in the country of issuance.	
Military exchange rates are available to customers at military banks and facilities in the country of issuance.	
Military exchange rates are available to customers at military banks and facilities in the country of issuance.	
Military exchange rates are available to customers at military banks and facilities in the country of issuance.	
Military exchange rates are available to customers at military banks and facilities in the country of issuance.	
Military exchange rates are available to customers at military banks and facilities in the country of issuance.	
Military exchange rates are available to customers at military banks and facilities in the country of issuance.</	

Cents and Sensibility
Money tip of the day

Are you ready to retire?

CBS MarketWatch

NEW YORK — Baby boomers may not be as prepared for retirement as they think.

Only 42 percent of boomers have decided on an age to retire and have actively planned out how much they should save each month to achieve that goal, reports Allstate Insurance Company. The company found that 38 percent of workers have made very few, if any, preparations for retirement.

How do you fare? Answer these 10 questions to find out if you're ready to retire:

- Have you and your spouse discussed retirement plans and goals?
- Do you know what options are available for retirement savings?
- Have you prepared an emergency fund or otherwise financially prepared for unexpected life events such as illness or unemployment?
- Do you periodically review your insurance coverage to ensure you are adequately covered?
- If you answered yes to two or fewer questions, it's not too late to be financially fit, so start doing your homework now.
- If you answered yes to three to six questions, you're off to a good start.

PRECIOUS METALS

Gold	New York Merc	\$440.80
Silver		\$6.93
Palladium		\$1,200.00
Platinum		\$1,200.00

INTEREST RATES

3-month bill	2.7
30-year bond	4.7
Sources: The Associated Press, Bank of America	

SATURDAY EVENING / DECEMBER 18, 2004

MOVIES

● **SPORTS**

[illegible]

JAPAN TV

Afternoon
 1:00 Traditional Arts of Japan: Kabuki (3)(r)
 2:00 2004 Phoenix Challenge Golf: 3rd Round
 (5)
 3:00 Japan Men's Handball Championship
 (5)
 4:00 Asian Japan-Okinawa Open Golf (10)
Evening
 6:30 Japan Rugby: NEC vs. World (42)
 7:00 News (1)
 8:10 Japan Rugby: Ricoh vs. Toshiba-Fuchu
 (42)
 12:45 E.R. VIII (1)
 2:10 French Movie (2001): Rue des Plaisirs
 (2:15)(5)
 2:50 Pro Boxing (4)
 3:40 Classical Music (1)(r)
 3:50 NFL Atlanta Falcons vs. Oakland Raiders
 (5)(4)

JAPAN TV-BS7

Morning
 :10 World News
 :10 World News
 :10 World News Hour
 :10 World News Hour
 :10 World Reports (r)
 :11:10 History of FIFA
 :15:00 CNN News

Afternoon
 :2:10 BS Documentary: Plea Bargaining
 :3 Men's Volleyball V-League: NEC vs. Asahi Kasei/Women's Volleyball V-League: NEC vs. Hitachi Sawa
 :10:05 FIFA World Cup: Road to Germany (3)

Evening
 :10:10 Figure Skating GP Series 2004: Final: Women's Singles
 :15:00 CNN News

1:10 NBA: Phoenix Suns vs. Seattle

3:35 World Amazing Sports
4:10 What's On Japan
5:10 PGA Tour Golf Lesson (13)
5:40 Football Mundial

JAPAN TV-BS11

Evening
7:00 NHK News
7:30 MTV Video Music Awards 2004
1:10 U.S. Movie (1995): Just Cause (1:45)

WOWOW

Morning
9:00 TV Series: CSI: Crime Scene Investigation - Miami

Afternoon

Evening
 8:00-9:00 U.S. Movie (2001): Black Knight (1:40)
 9:00-10:00 U.S. Movie (2003): National Security (1:30)
 10:30-11:30 TV Series: Angels in America No. 5
 11:40-12:40 TV Series: Angels in America No. 6
 12:00-12:30 TV Series: Friends the Final
 12:30-1:30 TV Series: Sex and the City (r)
 1:30-2:00 Canadian Movie (2001): Bilis (1:34)
 2:00-4:00 UEFA Euro 2004 Soccer: Russia vs. Greece (r)
 4:25 Spanish Soccer Liga Española

MTV

Morning
 8:00-9:00 Wake Up!
 9:00-10:00 Classic '90s
 10:00-11:00 Top Choice

Source: *U.S. Census Bureau, 1997*

10:00 U.S. Movie: 2001: Black Knight (1:40)
 10:30 U.S. Movie: 2003: National Security
Evening
 11:30 TV Series: Angels in America No. 5
 12:00 TV Series: Angels in America No. 6
 12:30 TV Series: Sex and the City
 13:00 Canadian Movie: Bill (1:34)
 13:30 U.S. Movie: The Untouchables: Russia vs. Spain (1:30)
 14:00 Spanish Series: Copi Uga Uga (1:30)

MTV
 10:00 Wake Up!
 10:30 Classic Rock
 11:00 The 100
 11:30 The 100

Overseas
 12:00 Canadian TV: Express
 12:30 Top Choice
 13:00 Canadian TV: The 100
 13:30 VATA Presents: FEAT ALPINE
 14:00 Pimp My Ride
Evening
 16:00 Making the Video: As Rule
 16:30 Canadian TV: The 100
 17:00 Consensus: Orange
 17:30 Consensus: Orange
 18:00 The Best of MTV 2004 Artist Special:
 Asher, Mary J. Blige & Brandy
 11:00 U.S. Top 20 with Super Dry
 11:30 Pimp My Ride
 13:00 Check the Rhythm
 14:00 The 100
 15:00 Rock On
 16:00 mmVCON: The Cure
 17:00 After Hours

Goats returned

VT CORINTH — A man who tried to care for more than 300 goats and had some of the animals living in his house with him has had animals that were seized from him returned and won permission to move them out of state.

Chris Weathersbee, 64, pleaded guilty to animal cruelty and two other charges as part of a plea bargain that called for the return of the seized goats and the removal of his herd to eastern Kentucky.

Weathersbee said he has hired a livestock trucking company and plans to leave soon for a Kentucky farm, where he expects the animals to be used on a vegetation-management project.

Homeless celebration

TX SAN ANTONIO — Central Texas' homeless and needy are not forgotten for the holidays, with thousands treated to food and gifts under an Interstate 35 bridge.

The event, for the second time in its 10-year history, included a brief tribute to homeless people in San Antonio who died during the year.

Organized by the San Antonio Area Homeless Action Coalition and the city's Community Initiative Department, the "Christmas Under the Bridge" attracted an estimated 2,000 people, including about 200 volunteers, said Maria Ramirez, a program manager with the city's community action division.

Treadmill world record

VA ARLINGTON — Michael Wardian knew he was going places, even if only on the treadmill.

The local runner beat a rather unusual world record by more than 10 minutes, running a 26.2-mile marathon on the exercise machine.

It's hard enough to run that distance out in the open, but Wardian — who qualified for the Olympic trials this year — set a time of 2:23:58. The previous record was 2:31:04, according to "The Book of Alternative Records."

Naughty business

CA WEST COVINA — Always wanted to leave a lump of coal in some Scrooge's Christmas stocking? Then Alec Nystrom has a deal for you.

The 11-year-old boy is selling lumps of coal for 50 cents each in front of his West Covina home. So far, he says, he's raked in about \$100.

Alec got the idea after his father, Roy, told him how his parents always warned him he'd receive a lump in his Christmas stocking if he wasn't good.

Alec's father is an artist who often uses coal in his work, so the boy had a ready supply to sell.

Alec said he hopes to sell enough lumps of coal this holiday season to buy a dirt bike.

Tree thief

MO ST. LOUIS — Organizers of a Christmas tree sale supporting youth hockey programs figured that a tree or two might get swiped from their outdoor lot after-hours.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

What they hadn't counted on was someone stealing more than 90 Christmas trees or the random acts of kindness that followed.

Others in the area have stepped forward, dropping off additional trees or donating money since last weekend's theft.

Tire tracks on a nearby field were the only clue about how the trees, worth about \$3,000, were taken.

Proceeds from the Christmas tree sale were supposed to pay for improvements at a community ice rink, she said.

Official not apologizing

NV RENO — State Controller Kathy Augustine remains unapologetic after becoming the only elected official in Nevada history to be impeached and convicted of malfeasance in office. She returned to the Capitol to complete her remaining two years. She told the Reno Gazette-Journal that she's eager to resume her political career and won't rule out a congressional campaign in 2006. She admitted violating state ethics laws and was fined \$15,000.

Judge offered on eBay

NY NEW YORK — A Manhattan housing court judge, whose picture was posted in an advertisement on eBay as putting

him up for sale, said he did not find the posting funny.

The ad for Judge Gerald R. Klein, accusing him of miscarriage of justice, depicted him sitting in the courtroom, smiling.

The judge said he was "outraged" by the posting, which eBay took down within about 90 minutes of finding out about it.

The ad, titled "Judge for Sale," was posted by Janet Schoenberg, the disgruntled litigant in a landlord-tenant dispute in New York City Civil Court who said Klein was mishandling the case and that she exhausted other ways of drawing attention to her case.

She maintained, however, that she meant the ad as a joke. "I didn't expect anybody to actually bid on this," she said. "It was satire, it was parody."

After four days, the best offer for the judge was \$127.50.

Senator out of race

AZ PHOENIX — State Senate President Ken Bennett says he won't run for governor in 2006. Bennett, a Republican, said he's shelving his earlier consideration of a run for the office now held by Gov. Janet Napolitano, a Democrat. At least two other prominent Republicans have said they may run for governor.

Inmates' calories cut

GA ATLANTA — The state Department of Corrections is cutting the average number of calories female prisoners may consume each day by about 20 percent to 2,472. The policy doesn't affect male inmates who still get about 3,000 calories. Critics say the policy discriminates. The National Academy of Sciences recommends roughly 2,200 calories per day for teenage girls and active women.

Persuading constituents

OH CLEVELAND — Mayor Jane Campbell is trying to sell Ohio voters on casino gambling after they've already rejected two such referendums. Campbell is pitching a plan that would allow cities to decide whether to build a casino, rather than relying on a yes or no vote to legalize gambling in Ohio. Supporters must gather more than 330,000 signatures from registered voters to place the issue on the November 2005 ballot.

Mail bomb sentence

PA ERIE — A man was sentenced to five years in federal prison for mailing a bomb made out of matches, gunpowder and a mousetrap to a man dating his ex-girlfriend.

Authorities said no one was injured by the bomb sent by Robert Reichard, 44, of Edinboro. The man who received it in November 2003 took it to state police and a bomb squad blew it apart with a water cannon.

Investigators linked Reichard to the package partly because a letter accompanying it contained the same misspelling — "we" instead of "know" — as letters and threatening e-mails he had previously sent to his former girlfriend and her new boyfriend.

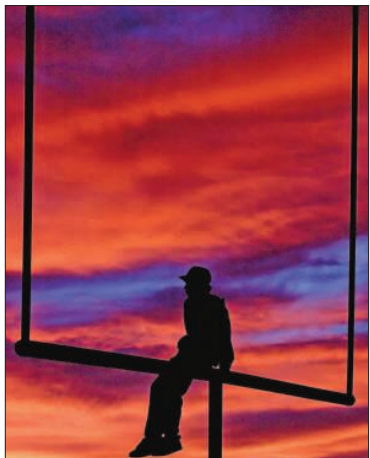


Under mom's watchful eye A Siberian tiger named Sinda, left, and one of her cubs sit behind a tree at the Louisville Zoo in Louisville, Ky. It was the first day the cubs were available for public viewing.



Tubular Christmas

George Wenderoth, of Wayne, N.J., front, this year's oldest tuba player at 82 years old, plays along with more than 400 tuba players from across the United States in the 31st annual "Merry Tuba Christmas" performance in New York's Rockefeller Center.



Just hanging out Carlos Sandoval sits on top of a football goal post as the sun sets in Hyrum, Utah. Sandoval said that he climbed the goal post while waiting to meet some friends.



Winter fun Chris Perham, 18, left, and Andrey Melkonyan, 19, both students at Lees-McRae College, ride their makeshift sled down a snow-covered hill on the campus in Banner Elk, N.C.



Pink lady engineers Team coach Dave McNamara works in the pit area on a robot with the all-girls team A.F.A. Engineers from Amherst Middle School, in brightly colored wigs, during the New Hampshire state finals of the FIRST LEGO League held at Nashua High School North in Nashua, N.H.



Holiday march Children dressed in traditional costume march in the procession leading to Mass during the Festival of Our Lady of Guadalupe at the Robeson County fairgrounds near Fayetteville, N.C.

Prenatal help on way

VA RICHMOND — Virginia is among five states awarded federal grants to help doctors and nurses identify women who suffer depression while pregnant and after giving birth.

Perinatal depression "is something women try to hide," said Mary Zoller, a policy analyst for the state Department of Health's Division of Women's and Infants' Health. "They are ashamed of it."

"You have this baby, and it is supposed to be a wonderful thing, but they are not feeling good about it. Women may be reluctant to ask for help."

Virginia will use its \$250,000 grant from the U.S. Human Resources and Services Administration to develop a Web-based training tool on perinatal depression.

This type of depression has received attention in recent years because of high-profile cases in which mothers killed their young children. In 2001, Andrea Yates of Texas drowned her five children in a bathtub and her attorney argued she suffered from postpartum psychosis.

Dangerous stockpile

PA ERIE — An alleged militia leader who authorities claimed built a bunker on his land and stockpiled weapons for a showdown with federal agents was sentenced to nearly 3 years in prison.

George Bilunka, 60, pleaded guilty in August to possessing unregistered firearms — two homemade land mines, a modified rifle and a homemade machine gun.

He also acknowledged that he and another alleged militia leader sold a copy of a Sten gun — a British-made World War II 9 mm machine gun — to an undercover federal agent for \$300.

Jesus statue vandalized

TN KNOXVILLE — A marble statue of the infant Jesus and his mother that stands in front of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Knoxville was vandalized, authorities said.

Someone cut off the baby's head and arms and doused the stumps in red paint. The vandal or vandals also threw the baby's head through a glass door, scrawled an upside-down cross on Mary's robe and covered her face with paint.

"In this season, when we're getting ready for the birth of Christ, to have these two images defaced and destroyed like this is disturbing," said the Rev. Vann Johnston, a priest in the diocese.

Arrest shocking

CA SAN FRANCISCO — Hans Aaland has for years been Livermore's living oddity — riding a 12-foot-tall unicycle in a jester hat, passing out protest leaflets, addressing the City Council on the "beauty of the community," and spouting revelations from God.

The 46-year-old man had a few run-ins with the law as well, but some people who know him say they were shocked nonetheless by his arrest on suspicion of killing his father.

Police say Aaland smothered his father, Kristian Aaland, as the father slept in the bedroom of the home he shared with his son and wife. Hans Aaland told his mother

what he had done, left a confession note full of biblical quotations and walked away from the home, police said.

Kristian Aaland, 80, an eccentric former scientist at the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory who buried a boxcar in his front yard as a bomb shelter during the Cold War, was found dead after his wife called for help, said police Sgt. Jim Subielski.

Two injured by boulder

HI KAPOLEI — Two people were injured when a boulder from a quarry rolled down a hillside and collided with their sport utility vehicle on the H-1 freeway in West Oahu.

The boulder, measuring five feet across, landed in the westbound lanes of the freeway near the Makakilo offramp.

Grace Pacific Corp. said the boulder was accidentally dislodged by a bulldozer widening a berm at its Makakilo quarry site.

The man and woman in the SUV suffered leg injuries, according to Capt. Keniston Tejeda, a Honolulu Fire Department spokesman.

They were taken to The Queen's Medical Center in serious condition, but were later upgraded to fair condition.

Bear chokes to death

TX ABILENE — One of the two American black bears at the Abilene Zoo died after apparently choking on a piece of meat.

Boo Boo's body was found after the bears were fed. Once the second bear, Teddy, 13, was moved, the zoo staff made a quick examination and confirmed that Boo Boo, 9, had died.

Dr. Clay Hilton, the zoo's consulting veterinarian, said Boo Boo must have eaten quickly and regurgitated a large, unchewed piece of meat that lodged in his windpipe.

Boo Boo was known for his never-ending quest for snacks and his cool dips in a pond.

Slughter violations

NC RALEIGH — State agricultural officials say they have found two major butchering operations this year where animals were slaughtered outdoors, either by the landowner or by his customers, and sold.

Both those cases will be criminally prosecuted, at least one as a felony, a rare event for the Department of Agriculture. Officials say they had one similar case in each of the two previous years, and both were handled with fines.

State inspectors say immigrants, many of whom don't know about state laws regulating food, are pushing the demand for illegal butchering.

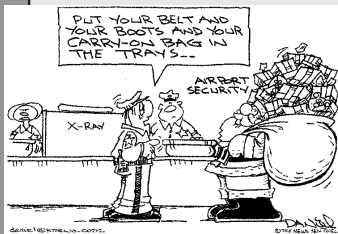
Bed donations

MN MINNETONKA — The Radisson Hotel chain is donating its old beds as it installs 90,000 new ones throughout its system in the United States, Canada and the Caribbean. The beds, mostly one and two years old, will be donated to nonprofit agencies that will take at least 200. Nearly half of the beds have been spoken for. The company is switching to the new beds over the next two years.

Stories and photos from wire services

Looking at the news

A weekly sampling of U.S. editorial cartoons



CHARLIE DANIEL/Scraps Howard



MIKE PETERS/King Features Syndicate



KEVIN KALLAUGHER/Carltonists & Writers Syndicate



GLENN MCCOY/Universal Press Syndicate



CHARLIE DANIEL/Scraps Howard

Horoscope

There may be some seemingly aimless wandering around while the moon is void of course this morning, but the lunar transit into Aries this afternoon helps us get down to business and make up for lost time. Mercury is still retrograde, so if you're out doing your shopping, just make sure you leave the stores with everything you came in with.

TODAY'S BIRTHDAY (December 18):

You're in excellent company this year—you surround yourself with people you admire and so will you raise yourself to the high standards they set. A windfall involves seizing your chance in the spotlight in January. You'll transition to a new home or job in March. Singles are extremely choosy, which is why love is such a thrill in the spring.

ARIES (March 21-April 19):

You're making a major time investment into someone, and you want to feel emotionally protected for that investment. This is the day to lay claim to the relationship by telling the other person what you'd like it to be. If it's love, say so.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20):

Indecision and spending time on the decision-making process are not the same thing. You'll deliberate the consequences of a potential action at length. This is not because you're afraid or crafty, but because you are wise.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21):

Friends call you wanting to vent, grieve, complain and kill time. This is an abuse of sorts—recognize it as such, and get off the phone. You're on a mission and simply can't afford to be an emotional dumping ground for others.

CANCER (June 22-July 22):

You feel like you're at the mercy of someone who is really busy. But there's no reason you should feel honored by scraps of attention and stolen moments. Place your energies where you know you'll get something in return.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22):

On a surface level, you are what you think

you are. But on a spiritual plane, even your own negative thoughts cannot diminish you. You'll automatically choose plenty of those, so choose some good thoughts to counteract.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22):

Come on, we all have an inner madman. Yours has been under lock and key lately, but it's safe to let him out for good behavior this weekend. Loved ones find your unpredictability so attractive.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23):

You'll be around plenty of bright people this weekend, and the spirit of competition is high. Instead of struggling to keep up, struggle to be genuine. Success goes not to the who knows more but to the who knows better.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21):

Clear (or burn) clutter, return phone calls, and deep-clean. By doing so, you plug up those little energetic leaks in your psyche—remember, little leaks sink big ships! Besides, getting organized is actually fun.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21):

You'll be exercising your capacity to love unconditionally—bet is, to give with no expectation of a return. As in any exercise, start small, and incrementally work your way up so as not to strain a muscle.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19):

Emotional balance is your aim. Stress and problems are a naturally occurring part of life, but you cope so gracefully that everything thrown your way seems rather minor—and so it is.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18):

You're tempted to waste the day away reading. News flash: It's not a waste! Mental exercises such as reading and meditation help you gain greater control over your thoughts, which leads to greater control over your life.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20):

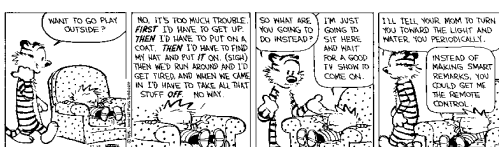
You come to an intersection. Down one road, you see many hills and valleys and a glorious but very distant oasis at the end. The other road curves suddenly so that you can't see a thing. How adventurous do you feel?

Creators Syndicate

Holiday Mathis



Calvin and Hobbes



Jump Start



Zits



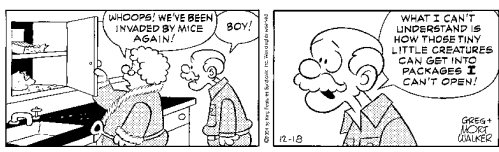
Cathy



Hi and Lois



Beetle Bailey



Red Rover



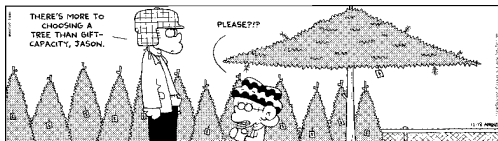
Better or Worse



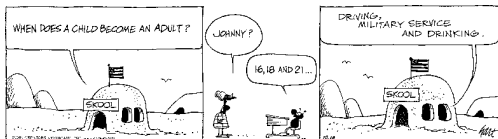
Peanuts



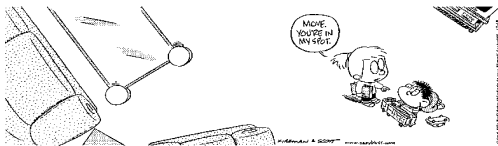
Fox Trot



B.C.



Baby Bites



Spider Man



Blondie



Dilbert



Hagar



Garfield



Eugene Sheffer Crossword

	1	2	3	4	5		6	7	8	9	10	11
12							13					
14							15					
16						17	18			19		
			20	21				22	23			
24	25	26		27			28		29		30	31
32			33					34				
35					36					37		
		38		39		40			41			
42	43			44	45			46	47	48	49	
			51				52	53				
54							55					
56							57					

Across

- Moving smoothly
- "Little Shop of Horrors" command
- Plaster art
- "Yes"
- Nut with a toxic shell
- Goalie's bailiwick
- Just adorable
- Staff member?
- Dapper fellow
- Streamlet
- Bill
- Abbr. after a surname
- Concluding passage
- Plumbum
- Crude but effective
- Country singer Jackson
- Plummet
- Pirouette pivot
- Eucalyptus product
- Urban area
- Navy rank (Abbr.)
- Sends out invitations
- Sends forth
- Lebanon's capital
- Overly decorated
- Get there
- Snatched (on)
- Bore more

57 Tic

Down

- Lady of the Haus
- For fear that
- "My Boo" singer
- Lemieux milieu
- Receive a file
- Datum
- Heron's
- Prior to
- Recidivist reneger
- Small plateau
- Paradise
- Stern disciplinarian?
- Satan
- Pronoun in a JFK quote
- Pub potato
- Historic period
- Impresario
- Hurk
- Precarious predicament
- Staff, often
- Fuss
- Go blue
- Wildbeest
- On pens.
- Strong purple
- Meddler
- In — way (ill)
- "Ta-Ra-Ra-Boom-Boom"
- Wrestling surfaces
- Particular
- Cartoonist Key
- Wardrobe malfunction
- Eminem's genre

Answer to Previous Puzzle

F	E	S	C	S	A	G	O	M	U	L
C	E	L	E	N	I	D	A	R	E	A
H	E	A	V	E	N	L	I	G	N	A
O	P	P	O	S	E	S	K	I		
			T	I	X	S	A	C	R	E
A	S	P	E	N	H	E	Y	O	R	O
W	O	R	D	J	O	Y	R	E	N	T
E	L	O	D	E	W	E	A	S	E	S
D	I	V	I	N	E	O	U	R		
			G	A	P	C	R	E	C	H
B	O	W	L	E	T	H	E	R	E	A
O	H	I	O	R	E	E	K	D	I	S
G	O	T	O	S	E	R	A	E	R	A

12-18 CRYPTOQUIP
M V SRAX'C CZEASRMOF
LZY TZO'S IWOS EZSRAX
SZ VMOT ZYS, TZ LZY CWL

"EZE'C SRA IZXT"?
Yesterday's Cryptquip: TO CHEER UP A SAD PERSON ON VALENTINE'S DAY, I RECKON YOU HAVE TO SAY "TAKE HEART!"
Today's Cryptquip Clue: E equals M

CLASSIFIED

<p>Home Electronics 570</p> <p>Forster, China - Play station 1 comes with 2 controllers and 1 game. Mostly sports, good, but absolute bargain for \$80 call 444-1158 or e-mail forsterusa@yahoo.com</p> <p>Kaduna, China - Sony Receiver with built in DVD player. Sells for \$400 at the GC in the States. Will sell for \$200. Yours? Just don't need anymore. Call 634-5987</p> <p>Kaduna, China - 20 inch TV \$25.00, 27 inch TV with DVD \$200.00. Must sell for \$100.00. Call 634-5987</p> <p>Kaduna, China - Sony 20 inch TV \$25.00, 27 inch TV with DVD \$200.00. Must sell for \$100.00. Call 634-5987</p> <p>Kaduna, China - Sony 20 inch TV \$25.00, 27 inch TV with DVD \$200.00. Must sell for \$100.00. Call 634-5987</p>	<p>Home Electronics 570</p> <p>Kaduna, China - Hitachi VHS-LD404000 VHS - JVC - 3000000 PRO player with one disc with remote. \$400. One Sony Minicam F073 great pictures direct to disc \$40. Call 634-5987</p> <p>Kaduna, China - Sony 20 inch TV \$25.00, 27 inch TV with DVD \$200.00. Must sell for \$100.00. Call 634-5987</p> <p>Kaduna, China - Sony 20 inch TV \$25.00, 27 inch TV with DVD \$200.00. Must sell for \$100.00. Call 634-5987</p> <p>Kaduna, China - Sony 20 inch TV \$25.00, 27 inch TV with DVD \$200.00. Must sell for \$100.00. Call 634-5987</p>	<p>Outdoor Living 775</p> <p>Forster, China - Beautiful little pink white and yellow golf ball. Best offer \$100.00. Call 634-5987</p> <p>Kaduna, China - Beautiful white golf wedding set. Pinnacles of center diamond. Blue and white. \$100.00. Call 634-5987</p> <p>Kaduna, China - Beautiful white golf wedding set. Pinnacles of center diamond. Blue and white. \$100.00. Call 634-5987</p> <p>Kaduna, China - Beautiful white golf wedding set. Pinnacles of center diamond. Blue and white. \$100.00. Call 634-5987</p>	<p>Outdoor Living 775</p> <p>Forster, China - Beautiful little pink white and yellow golf ball. Best offer \$100.00. Call 634-5987</p> <p>Kaduna, China - Beautiful white golf wedding set. Pinnacles of center diamond. Blue and white. \$100.00. Call 634-5987</p> <p>Kaduna, China - Beautiful white golf wedding set. Pinnacles of center diamond. Blue and white. \$100.00. Call 634-5987</p> <p>Kaduna, China - Beautiful white golf wedding set. Pinnacles of center diamond. Blue and white. \$100.00. Call 634-5987</p>	<p>Pets 820</p> <p>Forster, China - Rescued little pink white and yellow golf ball. Best offer \$100.00. Call 634-5987</p> <p>Kaduna, China - Beautiful white golf wedding set. Pinnacles of center diamond. Blue and white. \$100.00. Call 634-5987</p> <p>Kaduna, China - Beautiful white golf wedding set. Pinnacles of center diamond. Blue and white. \$100.00. Call 634-5987</p> <p>Kaduna, China - Beautiful white golf wedding set. Pinnacles of center diamond. Blue and white. \$100.00. Call 634-5987</p>	<p>Toys 945</p> <p>Kaduna, China - 1 in 1000. Best offer \$100.00. Call 634-5987</p> <p>Kaduna, China - 1 in 1000. Best offer \$100.00. Call 634-5987</p> <p>Kaduna, China - 1 in 1000. Best offer \$100.00. Call 634-5987</p> <p>Kaduna, China - 1 in 1000. Best offer \$100.00. Call 634-5987</p>	<p>Spinning Goods 945</p> <p>Kaduna, China - 1 in 1000. Best offer \$100.00. Call 634-5987</p> <p>Kaduna, China - 1 in 1000. Best offer \$100.00. Call 634-5987</p> <p>Kaduna, China - 1 in 1000. Best offer \$100.00. Call 634-5987</p> <p>Kaduna, China - 1 in 1000. Best offer \$100.00. Call 634-5987</p>	<p>Miscellaneous 1040</p> <p>Kaduna, China - 1 in 1000. Best offer \$100.00. Call 634-5987</p> <p>Kaduna, China - 1 in 1000. Best offer \$100.00. Call 634-5987</p> <p>Kaduna, China - 1 in 1000. Best offer \$100.00. Call 634-5987</p> <p>Kaduna, China - 1 in 1000. Best offer \$100.00. Call 634-5987</p>
--	---	---	---	---	--	--	--

Jobs Offered

Are you interested in supporting military history not just reading about it?

Stars and Stripes, a first amendment newspaper, is the pinnacle of a military's career. A tour with us can help you move up in your military career and prepare you for your career after the military. Contact your detailer for information on how you can be a part of the military's best news provider or email U Col Todd at todd@stripes.us

Stars and Stripes is a DOD field activity of the Office of Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs.

Openings include:

- 2 USMC Korea billets (Open Dec 04)
- 1 USN Tokyo Journalist (Immediate vacancy)
- 1 USN Tokyo (Open Feb 05)
- 1 USN YN1 Tokyo Information Manager (Immediate vacancy)

Your One-Stop Newspaper
STARS & STRIPES
www.stripes.com

Position Available: SQL Senior Software Engineer

Full-time Government Contractor position available in Okinawa, Japan negotiable.

Please send qualifications and experience to hr@idv.cox.net

Visual Information Specialist

Services/Marketing is seeking a Visual Information Specialist. The successful candidate will have experience with some or all of the following:

- PhotoShop or Illustrator or PageMaker
- Professional advertising design software
- We use Macintosh G5 computers.

The successful candidate will be SOFA-eligible, have ad layout and/or page layout experience. Image/branding development experience a plus. This position requires creativity, flexibility and the ability to perform under pressure.

Please apply with a resume at Yokota AB, HR0 Bldg 37 from 10am-3pm M-F. Position is open until filled. EOE.

STAR SERVICES
Lender Support & Connectivity Service

Pentagon CHANNEL *Reaching Those Who Serve*

Watch the new Pentagon Channel ...

Stars and Stripes, a first amendment newspaper, is the pinnacle of a military's career. A tour with us can help you move up in your military career and prepare you for your career after the military. Contact your detailer for information on how you can be a part of the military's best news provider or email U Col Todd at todd@stripes.us

Stars and Stripes is a DOD field activity of the Office of Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs.

Openings include:

- 2 USMC Korea billets (Open Dec 04)
- 1 USN Tokyo Journalist (Immediate vacancy)
- 1 USN Tokyo (Open Feb 05)
- 1 USN YN1 Tokyo Information Manager (Immediate vacancy)

Your One-Stop Newspaper
STARS & STRIPES
www.stripes.com

STRIPES RELOCATION GUIDE

Washington, D. C. Area & Northern Virginia Free 200 Page Book

**"How to Buy Your Home,
Without Getting Ripped Off"**



Area Maps, Newspapers
Over 50,000 Homes for sale

www.TerrySeaman.Com
Terry Seaman Realty 1-800-708-9969

COLORADO

Ft. Carson NORAD-Air Force Academy-Peterson & Schriever AFB

NEW BUILT or RESALE • FIRST TIME HOME BUYER?
RELOCATION PACKAGE FOR HOME BUYERS
---CHECK OUT OUR BIG \$\$\$ SPECIAL---

PETRA HAEBICH
Broker/Associate
RE/MAX PARTNERS, Inc.
Petrahaebich@remax.net



DWIGHT HOWARD
Branch Manager
RBC MORTGAGE

www.PetraHaebich.com

We'll get you Pre-Approved BEFORE you move!
Professional Service - Personal Touch

Going Home? Get a PCS Loan!

For a fast loan...



omni
MILITARY LOANS

click here!

www.yesomni.com

FORT JACKSON, SC

Web Site: **www.fortjacksonrelo.com**
E-mail: **duker@fortjacksonrelo.com**

Call Bob Duker, USA, Ret.
Write: Military Relocation Team
7001 St. Andrews Rd. PMB 102 • Columbia, SC 29212

Relocation Package

40 Page Home Buyers Guide • VA Preapproval
• Germany Toll Free Anytime
(800-225-5288) - 800-447-3636



COLORADO SPRINGS

Relocating Service, Inc.
Our Service is **FREE**

RENTALS & SALES

Apartments Condos
Townhomes Duplexes
Houses Corporates
VA Information

relocating@qwest.net
www.colorspringsrelocating.com
1-800-798-6620

Northern VA, Quantico, DC

Bob Graham's Military Buyers Program

\$2,000 CASH BACK!

#1 Military Relocation Specialist

bobnova@erols.com
www.bobgrahamvarelo.com

Free Relo Packet • Long and Foster



From Coast to Coast All Bases and Retirement Destinations

Find your home today!
www.TheEmetGroup.com

- Retired USAF — We know the PCS process
- Serving all the Military Community
- Do your loan qualification now, before you PCS

Want more? Contact us
wiamert@tampabay.rr.com
Toll Free 866-856-6318



Walter & Susan Lamerton
Realtor/Licensed Assistant

GLOBAL Mortgage



COLUMBIA
LL CREDIT & HOME INC.

Fort Bragg/Pope AFB

Retired Air Force member is willing to locate the right home for you and your family in the Fayetteville area. Contact me for referrals to other areas.

MarkJohnson@remax.net
Direct : (910)391-5804



Premier
Properities
Major MTRs



**Relocation Specialist for Northern VA,
Quantico, and the DC Area**
WWW.HOMESALETEAM.COM

I pride myself on being an expert in Northern Virginia in both home listings and home purchases. I am very knowledgeable with the local areas schools, commuting and businesses.

Being part of a military family I am extremely familiar with the issues that surround any relocation, whether across the street or across the globe. It is my commitment to help reduce the stress with such a move.

Tina Zimmerman and Associates
Coldwell Banker Residential Brokerage
Toll Free: 800-327-9758
Local: 703-346-3621

Mobile: 546-3794357
E-Mail: **homesaleteam@mrts.com**
Website: **www.homesaleteam.com**

COLDWELL BANKER
RESIDENTIAL BROKERAGE

*Not to be confused with any other offices. Please check our website. Certain restrictions may apply.

PCS-ing to WASHINGTON DC or Northern VIRGINIA?

Pentagon, Andrews, Ft. Belvoir, or Anywhere!

Call for a **FREE, comprehensive**

Home Buyer's Relocation Package:

Maps, Loan Preapproval Information, School Profiles

Ask for Becky Berning: 703-913-7880

Call Toll Free:

Italy: 1 678 781 58 UK: 0800 96 8801 Germany: 0800 181 6459

Netherlands: 0800 229 143 Belgium: 0800 713 77 USA: 800 800 6781

www.MyMilitaryHomeFinder.com

e-mail: **BECKY@longandfoster.com**



Fort Hood

Sales and Rentals • **FREE Relocation Packets**

CALL US Mike or Denise Zehr
"Years of Texas Friendly Service"

Toll Free: 0800-826-4620

1-254-547-2019 500 Town Square Shopping Center
Copperas Cove, Texas 76522

First Community Mortgage
Tammy Thornhill
Assistant Vice President
Tammy.thornhill@1stmb.com
Tel. 254.542.5100
Toll Free: 01.308.18786

1st COMMUNITY MORTGAGE

www.zehrrealestateteam.com • zehrteam@earthlink.net

COLUMBIA

Ft. Stewart & Hunter

SALES and RENTALS

Toll Free: 1-800-476-3680

www.fortstewart.com

Coldwell Banker Holtzman, Realtors

Email: **cbholtzman@clds.net**
730 General Stewart Way • Hinesville, GA 31313



Fort Lewis Housing

http://www.fortlewishousing.com

Fort Lewis, WA

Home Buyers Guide Homes for Sale VA Mortgages

Testimonials Fort Lewis Info Maps

Govt Repos Why Buyer's Agent? Contact Us

CALL 1-360-491-6500

PORT LEWIS INFO

ARRIVAL

UNITS

SCHOOL INFO

CLASSIFIEDS

LOCAL AREA

STRIPES RELOCATION GUIDE

The Kitty Bernard Team
would like to help you find a new place to call home and we want to be the paradise you've made to keep us safe and free.

For the best professional Real Estate Services in Northern Virginia call:

The Kitty Bernard Team
(703) 707-2084
www.KittyBernard.com
email: Kitty@KittyBernard.com
1301 Arroyo Pkwy., #300, Reston, Virginia 20190

SOLD

"Let us help you find a place to call Home"

Fort Polk
www.coldwellbanker.com

- New Home Construction
- Serving Deridder and Leesville
- Free Relocation Information

COLDWELL BANKER

Contact Me Today!
Wayne Hall
Broker/Owner
waynehall@yahoo.com
(337) 463-9994

Wayne Hall Real Estate
800-877-0677

COLORADO SPRINGS

VIEW EVERY HOME NOW
at
www.ColoradoMilitaryRelo.com

Helping the military move home to the mountains for over 20 years!

THE CHERRY TREE REALTY
NEXGEN

Log On and Pre-Qualify for FREE!

1-800-947-8153

4VA LOAN.COM

Changing the Way the Military Moves™

MEMBER FDIC

Ft Jackson ★ Shaw AFB ★ Charleston AFB
Beaufort MCAS ★ Parris Island ★ Naval Hosp

HOME BUYER REPRESENTATION SPECIALISTS

Buyers: "We work to get you the best price & terms"
"One stop shopping" - We handle it all

Loan Approval • Negotiations • Inspections • Insurance • Closing

Call George: 1-800-310-5112 weekends are OK or
george@schemebuyer.com or www.schemebuyer.com

Ask for: Relocation Pkg, info on Schools, Area & Jobs
Home Buyer Representation Realty, Inc. **NO FEES!**

UMRC Cash Back To Buyers 3 Free Nights In Hotel

PCSing to **FORT HOOD**
Ft. Bragg, Ft. Campbell, Ft. Stewart, Ft. Lewis, Ft. Knox...

FREE RELOCATION INFORMATION

Call Chris Roussel
Coldwell Banker United, Realtors
2705-E Highway 190, Copperas Cove, TX 76522

Call Toll Free: 1-800-100-2106 • E-Mail: croussel@cbunited.com
First-time homebuyer, Endorsement, School, Buyer Information, VA/Relocation Rates.

Pre-qualify with National Bank Mortgage Lender • Toll Free: 1-800-182-4032
Lee Huffner • FDIC/Equal Housing Lender

FOR KNOX

CALL GENE & ERIKA GUDENKAUF
TOLL FREE FOR YOU!
1-800-181-6612

One Call Does It All!

Free Relocation Packages • VA Homes
Property Rentals • New Homes
FIND:
Local Listings • School Reports
Loan Pre-Qualification and more!
By visiting us at:

www.area-home.com
or email us at:
egudenkauf@remax.net
Teamwork that makes your dream work!

Gene & Erika Gudenkauf
RE/MAX Advantage+
1-888-470-7089
705 N. Dixie Highway
Radcliff, KY 40160

30 min. or less commute!

FT. BRAGG POPE AFB
Live in the "Golf Capital"

Pinehurst, Southern Pines NC

Check out **www.morencore.com**
Jim Murray, rayplum@ncrr.com
800-528-8742 USA
Moore Co. Real Estate Brokers

Fort Bragg & Pope AFB
www.fayettevilleopenhouse.com

1000's of Homes for Sale
1000's of Homes for Rent
100's of Pictorial Tours

FREE Real Estate Magazine

MOVING TO HAMPTON ROADS VA?
Langley AFB ★ Norfolk Naval Base
Yorktown ★ Norfolk ★ Hampton
Newport News ★ Williamsburg ★ Suffolk

Barbara and Ken Kerwin
Abbott Realty
1-800-721-5229
US@2Kerwin.com
www.2Kerwin.com
www.WeSellHamptonRoads.com

Denver-Aurora Colorado Springs
Parker, Castle Rock, Monument, Lakewood

Colorado PCS Realty
FREE relocation kit, home sales & VA loan information. Check our web site for FREE temporary, furnished lodging available to our home buying customers.

Phil McArthur Broker-owner
Email: ColoradoPCS@aol.com
USA 1-800-274-0578
www.coloradopcs.com

Fort Benning Bound?

★ Five Star Service
With the Buyer's Resource Team

Steve Freeman & Mary Ellen Vernie

- Cash Back Program
- Military Relo
- Accredited Buyer Brokers
- Specialist
- PCS Kit for home Buyers
- Retired Military from Germany 800-255-288-889-397-7356

relocate.columbus@mindspring.com
www.columbusarelocation.com

REAL ESTATE'S INC.
100% VA Loans Provided in Minutes
Free Pre-approval! E-mail Harriette Elkins
at Harriette@MortgageAmerica.com
706-322-1800 or Toll Free 1-888-399-1800

FORT GORDON GEORGIA (Or anywhere in the US)

EXCLUSIVE Buyers Agent!

Augusta Home Buyer's Connection

See our website for homes, loan information, important area links

E-mail: broker@AugustaHomeBuyers.com
Call: 888-253-2707
www.AugustaMortgageSolutions.com
www.AugustaHomeBuyers.com

FREE LOCATION PACKET
PCS'ing to Fort Campbell, KY!

CRVE-LEIRE REALTOR

Jim Phillips

Visit me at: www.realestatedarksville.com
or e-mail: jphill8435@aol.com
Toll free from Germany 800-183-0131

Buying, renting, new construction or older house!
VA, FHA Conventional Loans & Assistance Available.

COLORADO
PCSing to Colorado Springs?
Call Christa Miranda
or Tiffany Aides (Assistant)

A 26 year Military Family
moving Mountains to make
your Real Estate Dreams come true.

German Speaking.

Toll Free: 1-866-539-2508 • Cell: 719-351-5963
Email: christa.miranda@coldwellbanker.com
www.CheyenneMountainRealty.com

ASSISTING MILITARY FAMILIES
Nationwide Lender.
Lowest Rates. Guaranteed.

CATHOLIC HOME LOAN

800.270.8565
www.CATHOLICHOMELOAN.COM

The Home You Want...
Where You Want It!

Quality Homes Built On Your Land!

Visit
www.AmericasHomePlace.com
and visit the most interactive home builder's site on the web!

Shop for your new home online and save time and money

- Take a virtual tour of some of our homes
- Watch interactive videos
- Make color selections for siding, cabinetry & more!

THE BUCKINGHAM

Choose from over 70 Floor Plans ranging from 900 to 3000+ Sq.Ft.

What our customers are saying...
"An interactive web site that works...love it!"
"This is cool...never seen anything like this before!"
"Very impressed with your web site and service. Thanks for enabling the plans."

AMERICA'S HOME PLACE NC

In Southeast USA Call
1 800 New-House
FREE Floor Plan Book & Video

Eagles face nice dilemma

If home field is in hand, team could rest starters

By BOB BROOKOVER
The Philadelphia Inquirer

PHILADELPHIA — The Eagles might find themselves in a rare situation Sunday after they run through that large inflatable helmet and past the cheerleaders at Lincoln Financial Field.

Thirteen hours earlier, the results from the Carolina-Atlanta game will be in, and if the resurgent Panthers win, the Eagles will have nothing to play for in terms of the standings when they take on the Dallas Cowboys.

Only four teams in the 26 years since the schedule was extended to 16 games have had their division title, a first-round bye and home-field advantage wrapped up before they played their 14th game.

The good news for the Eagles and coach Andy Reid is that three of those teams went on to win the Super Bowl. But they still must figure out how they are going to handle the situation.

Do the starters continue to play? If so, do they play the entire game, half a game, one quarter? Does anyone with even a minor injury get the week off? Reid apparently has already made up his mind about how he's going to handle the game with the Cowboys on Sunday, regardless of the Falcons' result.

"The starters are going to play and that's how we'll approach it," he said Wednesday.

That's fine with the starters. "If going into that week or game, I'm not going to play, I'll take that," safety Brian Dawkins said. "If he says I'm going to play, then I will take that. In other words, whenever my number is called to be on the field, I'm going to give you what I've got."

Quarterback Donovan McNabb agreed. "I'm a guy who loves playing football," McNabb said. "No matter what decisions Andy makes, as a player, I want to get out there and continue to get better, so when the playoffs

come around, we are at our best and ready to go."

"It always feels good to go out there and be fresh, but you want to keep your chemistry and your timing. If it's playing the whole game against St. Louis or going out and playing against Cincinnati, obviously it's his decision, but I'm going to prepare like I'm playing every game."

Former Eagles linebackers coach Ron Rivera was a member of the 1985 Chicago Bears team that went 15-1, a team that remains the only one to have clinched home field throughout the playoffs with four games left.

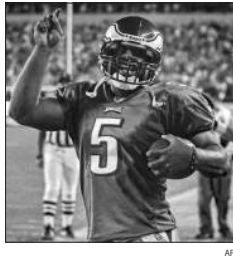
The Bears, however, had plenty of motivation in their 13th game because they were still unbeaten at the time. They lost their chance to go unbeaten on "Monday Night Football" in Miami, but Rivera, who is in his first season as the Bears' defensive coordinator, said coach Mike Ditka kept things intense for the final three games.

"In '85, we played every game the same, and we practiced the same way," Rivera said. "We worked every day and we hit every day, especially for our nine-on-seven drills. Our starters played just like any other game and, once the game was in hand, we replaced them with our backups."

"I believe [Ditka] felt the only way to keep our edge was to continue to approach the rest of the season like it meant something. The loss to Miami seemed to take some of the pressure off us and was kind of a wake-up call."

Rivera said Ditka was not that concerned about finishing with a 15-1 record after the loss to Miami, but defensive coordinator Buddy Ryan remained determined to make sure the Bears finished the season as the NFL's No. 1 defense.

Ditka's approach worked in that postseason as the Bears rolled to their first Super Bowl title, outscoring their three opponents 91-10. The Denver Broncos and coach Mike Shanahan took a different approach in 1996.



AP

Even if the Eagles have nothing to play for Sunday against Dallas, quarterback Donovan McNabb said, "I'm a guy who loves playing football. No matter what decisions Andy [Reid] makes, as a player, I want to get out there and continue to get better, so when the playoffs come around, we are at our best."

After going 12-1 and clinching home-field advantage in the AFC, Shanahan replaced quarterback John Elway the following week with Bill Musgrave and the Broncos were whipped by the eventual Super Bowl champion Green Bay Packers.

Elway started the next week and played a quarter in Denver's season finale, but the Broncos lost two of their final three games and ended up losing to Jacksonville in their first playoff game.

Interestingly, the coach took a different approach to things in 1998. Even after the Broncos lost their 14th and 15th games of the season and had nothing to play for in their season finale, the coach left Elway in the entire game in the regular-season finale.

The only other team to have homefield advantage wrapped up before its 14th game of the season was the 1984 San Francisco 49ers. They finished 1-1 before winning their second of five Super Bowls by blowing away Miami.

49ers QB Dorsey has a taste of success

The Associated Press

SANTA CLARA, Calif. — Ken Dorsey's second season with the San Francisco 49ers has taken a turn for the better. Now he's determined to keep it moving in that direction.

Dorsey will start his second consecutive game Saturday against the Washington Redskins, and he could finish the season at quarterback in place of regular starter Tim Rattay.

Rattay is out with a foot injury and might not play again this season. Dorsey had the best game of his career Sunday, leading the 49ers to a 31-28 overtime victory at Arizona.

That win snapped a seven-game losing streak for the 49ers (12-11), who are looking to salvage something out of a tumultuous season that has featured coaching controversy and plenty of lackluster performances.

"You've kind of got to keep your foot on the pedal, just kind of stay aggressive and just make sure you're on top of the ball the whole game," Dorsey said. "That game was a lot of opportunities last week."

Dorsey took advantage, winning for the first time in four career starts. He threw three touchdown passes, completing 18 of 34 passes for 191 yards and guiding San Francisco to the winning field goal on overtime.

Dorsey had struggled in his previous two starts in place of Rattay, failing to lead San Francisco's offense to a touchdown in losses to Seattle and Chicago. He entered last week's game with a quarterback rating of 53.9, a figure lower than any NFL quarterback who qualified for those ratings.

Dorsey's previous struggles this year diminished enthusiasm within the organization that the former University of Miami star could be the 49ers' quarterback of the future. But Dorsey's play last week rekindled some hope.

"He did some really good things and made some really good throws," coach Dennis Erickson said. "He's healthier now and he made good decisions. He missed some throws, which you are going to do when you haven't played, but he made some good ones to win it."

Dorsey hit receiver Cedrick Wilson between three defenders for a first down on a third-and-17 play that kept the winning drive alive. Dorsey said he never had been the best throw he has made in the NFL, and it was one he couldn't have made earlier in the year when he was dealing with a back, groin and thumb injuries.

"It's kind of a relief just to be able to go out and perform and play well again," said Dorsey, who said he still has a long way to go as a rookie after leading Miami to a 38-2 record in four years as a starter. "It's kind of a load off your mind. I can finally realize that you can still play the game, have success out there and understand that the hard times aren't always going to be so hard."

Shanahan says Plummer is staying

By FRANK SCHWAB

The (Colorado Springs) Gazette

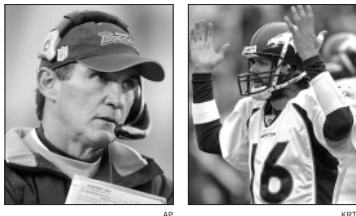
ENGLEWOOD, Colo. — On the same day that Denver Broncos quarterback Jake Plummer continued to answer questions about an obscure gesture he made during Sunday's game against Miami, Broncos coach Mike Shanahan confirmed Plummer is his quarterback of the future.

Shanahan told ESPN on Wednesday that he will exercise the \$6 million option bonus that Plummer is due in March, which means Plummer will be the Broncos' quarterback for next season and likely beyond.

"Jake Plummer's going to be here," Shanahan said, according to ESPN.com. "I like him. I like the way he competes. Normally I don't talk about contracts. But since there's been a lot of attention on him the last couple of weeks, I'm really surprised."

That says to rest the biggest question about Plummer, who has been under a lot of heat in recent weeks for his spotty play and recent controversial interception.

Plummer said he hasn't been informed by the NFL if he will be fined for the gesture he made to a heckling fan after he threw a first-quarter interception. NFL spokesman Steve Ailes said the league will announce this week whether Plummer will be fined.



AP

HRT

Denver coach Mike Shanahan, above, said the team will exercise the \$6 million option bonus that Jake Plummer is due in March.

Jake Plummer has thrown 17 interceptions, tied for second-most in the NFL, and 22 TD passes, third in the AFC.

The incident was a hot topic during Plummer's weekly news conference.

Plummer was asked again about the gesture. Like he did after Sunday's game, Plummer apologized.

"What happened last week, I think I've addressed well enough on Sunday night and I'm apologetic for it and stand up here as a man and say that will never happen again," Plummer said. "But, any time I've ever made a mistake or I've ever done wrong, I want to move on and the only

thing I can do is try to correct that. A big win in Kansas City is a right step in that direction."

The Broncos play at Kansas City on Sunday.

Plummer also talked about what caused him to react to the heckling fan Sunday.

"You're looking at a guy that's not perfect," Plummer said. "I'm not a robot. I'm a man that's got warm blood that sometimes gets hot in there and runs through my veins. People do things that they regret. As long as you can learn a lesson from it and step up and be

a man about what your actions were and move on, I think that's the true lesson you learn from it."

Plummer might not have it easy this week playing at Arrowhead Stadium, one of the most hostile stadiums to visitors. Chiefs guard Will Shields said he didn't know if Plummer would have a tougher time at Arrowhead because he reacted to a heckler last week, and he added the Chiefs' stadium isn't much different than any NFL stadium.

"I think anywhere you go, there's going to be some fan that's looking to heckle people and give us a hard time," Shields said on a conference call with Colorado reporters. "I haven't played in a place that doesn't have one or two, or maybe even five or six. That's what they get their kicks out of, trying to be difficult and trying to affect your play on the field."

One point Plummer made a few times during his conference was that a lot of the criticism of Plummer was outside the box if the Broncos win at Kansas City.

Plummer has thrown 17 interceptions this season, tied for second-most in the NFL. He has also thrown 22 touchdowns, which is a third in the AFC, and is on pace to throw for 3,998 yards. Plummer said he thought he has the support of plenty of Broncos fans.

"I think there's still a large [group] of people that are happy I'm here," he said.

Kitna to run Bengals' surging offense

Last season's starter takes cover while Palmer rests sore knee

BY KEVIN GOHEEN

Scraps Howard News Service

CINCINNATI — Jon Kitna stepped into the news conference room underneath Paul Brown Stadium and did a double take. The last time he spoke in the room last season, he did so behind a lectern with one microphone. Now the room has a raised platform with a table and chairs for multiple speakers to sit on during an interview.

"I want my podium back," Kitna said.

A few hours later, up to the seats hobbled Carson Palmer. A brace on his left leg, protecting the strained MCL he suffered during last Sunday's 35-28 loss at New England, Palmer leaned the crutches he used to enter the room up against a wall and managed himself up the couple of steps to the table.

"I think I get to ditch those on Saturday, so I'm looking forward to that," Palmer said, an indication of the possibility he'll

play this Sunday when the Bengals host the Buffalo Bills. "It's looking bleak for this weekend, but right now I'm set on playing (Dec. 26) against the Giants. The only thing that's going to hold me back is if my (medical staff) won't let me play."

"It's getting stronger every day and I'm trying to keep as much pressure off and but at times I'm testing it and seeing where it's at and getting stronger. I'll be ready to play next weekend."

Bengals head coach Marvin Lewis said Wednesday the team's decision on whether to start Kitna or Palmer will wait until Sunday. But his young quarterback beat him to the punch.

"I'd be pretty shocked," said Palmer about playing. "It would be great. I'd love it. But I'd be pretty shocked."

So, apparently, in steps Kitna to retake control of an offense that in the past three games has produced at least 453 yards and averaged 37.7 points. No one expects the

production to be any less against the Bills, even though Buffalo has the No. 3-ranked defense in the league.

"The last time we had some uncertainty as to who was going to play, we scored 58 points, so I don't think that's going to be an issue," Kitna said, referring to the Bengals' 58-48 win against Cleveland on Nov. 28. Palmer suffered back spasms during the week's missed practice time and was listed as probable on the injury report for that game.

"We add new wrinkles here or there, but we do what we do whether Carson's in there or I'm in there. So I don't think there's going to be a disruption to the flow of the offense or anything like that. The stuff we've been doing this year is stuff that we've been doing for the last couple years."

Kitna replaced Palmer in the third quarter of last Sunday's game, completing nine of 13 passes for 126 yards, with one touch-



Last season, Bengals quarterback Jon Kitna (2) had career highs in touchdown passes (26) and passing yards (3,591). Carson Palmer expects to play on Dec. 26.

down and one interception. Palmer was knocked out of the game after being hit by Patriots defensive lineman Richard Seymour as he released a pass.

Bulger might play at Arizona

The Associated Press

ST. LOUIS — Marc Bulger tested his sprained right shoulder for the second time last week on Wednesday, giving the St. Louis Rams some hope he might return to the lineup.

NFL briefs

Bulger missed Sunday's loss at Carolina, and backup Chris Chandler had a career-worst six interceptions. So, there's urgency for Bulger to play with the Rams (6-7) one game back in the NFC West entering Sunday's game at Arizona.

On Wednesday, Bulger threw about a dozen passes in an individual drill after throwing several warmup tosses. He threw about three-quarters speed and a bit side-arm, but it was enough for coach Martz to exclaim, citing Bulger's jersey number, "10's back!" after the first pass.

Bulger didn't participate in any team drills, but the plan is to gradually increase the work load and then make a decision on his availability, perhaps on Friday.

"I don't know what to tell you because he actually threw the ball a lot better today than I would have predicted," Martz said after practice. "He feels like he can zip it, but we just asked him to refrain from that."

Martz said Bulger, who wasn't made available for comment, had a little trouble on the flow through.

Steelers' Bettis thinking about retiring
PITTSBURGH — Jerome Bettis is thinking about retiring.

The Pittsburgh Steelers running back said his health — not whether the Steelers win the Super Bowl — will determine

NFL injury update

Injuries to prominent NFL players, followed by team's prognosis. (See Page 35 for complete injury report provided by the league.)
Packers LB Nat'l Diggs (bruised kidney) probable.
Browns FS Aeneas Williams (neuro) likely only for the season.
Redskins CB Shawn Springs (concussion) out for Saturday's game.

whether he plays in 2005. Bettis missed significant playing time in 2001 and 2002 with groin and knee injuries, but hasn't missed a game since then.

Bettis, the NFL's No. 6 career rusher with 13,037 yards, has flourished as a part-time running back the past two seasons.

He ran for 811 yards in 2003 despite backing up Anquan Zareo for six games and has 647 yards and a career-high 12 touchdowns this season, including four consecutive 100-yard games while replacing injury Duke Staley.

"I'm not getting any younger," said Bettis, who will be 33 in February. "Every time we win it means a lot more because it could be the last one."

Retired Williams says Miami's bad season isn't his fault

NEW YORK — Ricky Williams insists the Miami Dolphins' dismal season isn't his fault.

"That's their problem ... It's not my problem anymore," Williams told "60 Minutes" in an interview to air Sunday on CBS. "I peaked as hard as I could whenever I put that uniform on, but I'm not doing that anymore, you know? I moved on."

The Dolphins are 2-11 this season. Williams, 27, stunned his team by retiring short-

ly before Miami opened training camp. "I didn't know ahead of time or I would have given them a clue," he said.

Williams said a third failed drug test made him retire because he was "scared to death" that people would find out he smoked marijuana.

"The thing I had the most trouble with was that after you fail your third test, then it becomes public knowledge," Williams said in the interview. "That's one thing I couldn't deal with at the time — people knowing that I smoke marijuana. That was my biggest fear in my whole entire life."

Janikowski gets five-year extension

ALAMEDA, Calif. — Sebastian Janikowski finalized a \$10.5 million, five-year contract extension with the Oakland Raiders on Wednesday that makes him the highest paid kicker in the NFL.

The 26-year-old Janikowski, the Raiders first-round draft pick in 2000, has converted all but three of his 22 field-goal attempts this season for the Raiders (4-9). He is 112-of-140 in his career.

Panthers P Sauerbrun arrested for driving while impaired

CHARLOTTE, N.C. — Carolina Panthers punter Todd Sauerbrun was arrested and charged with driving while impaired and related to an \$1,700 bond.

Sauerbrun also was charged with speeding and driving while his license was revoked, Julia Rush, a spokeswoman for the Mecklenburg County Sheriff's Department, said Thursday.

The All-Pro player attended practice, but declined comment. Coach John Fox said Sauerbrun will play Saturday at Atlanta.

E. Smith wants to run next season

BY BOB BAUM

The Associated Press

TEMPE, Ariz. — Fifteen seasons may not be enough for Emmitt Smith.

The NFL's most prolific halfback carrier sounds as if he would like to come back for a 16th, either with the Arizona Cardinals or another team.

"I don't have no problem playing next year," he said Thursday.

Smith stopped short of saying he will definitely come back.

"I'm definitely happy with the way I performed in terms of the success of the team and all," he said. "But I wanted to make a contribution, and I feel like I have made a contribution, and I think I've got a lot in me to make more contributions to this team or wherever it may be if I choose to continue on."

The 35-year-old has rushed for 732 yards on 202 carries, an average of 3.6 yards per carry, and has scored five touchdowns. A sore big left toe kept him out of one game, and his carries have dwindled in the other three as Arizona (4-9) fell behind early in losing four straight. He needs 90 yards in each of the next three games to reach 1,000.

Coach Dennis Green, who has said he thought this was Smith's final season, sidestepped the subject on Thursday.

"You know what? I haven't thought about anything except the Rams right now," said Green, whose team plays St. Louis on Sunday. "We've got three games to go, and I'm focused on the first game."

Lacking big plays, Jets' run-oriented attack is grounded

BY ANDREA ADDESSEN

The Associated Press

HEMPSTEAD, N.Y. — Santana Moss prides himself on being the big-play receiver for the New York Jets.

So how come he felt now that the Jets have hardly hit any long pass plays the past few weeks while struggling to score?

"I am coming out there furious sometimes because I think every

time I get out there I can beat someone. But if I don't get the ball, what can I do?" Moss said.

Though Moss avoided saying he wanted the ball more, it's clear how he felt when asked how to be more involved in the offense: "Get back there, throw myself the ball and then I run it," he joked.

Though he was kidding, Moss and some of his teammates showed frustration with the offense Wednesday following a lack-

luster performance in a 17-6 loss to Pittsburgh. Earlier this week, backup running back LaMont Jordan said the Jets fail to play well in big games and the offense needs to produce.

That means more big plays from the offense, which has relied heavily on the run this season.

In two games since Chad Pennington returned from a strained right rotator cuff, the Jets have two passing plays for 20 yards or

more, both last week against the Steelers. Moss, the fastest player on the team, has been a non-factor for most of the season, though he did have several drops.

He has a combined four catches in the past two games for 43 yards. Last season, Moss had a career year, going over 1,000 yards with 10 touchdown receptions.

When asked why the Jets have not relied more on play-action

passing, something Pennington does well, some players blurted.

Center Kevin Mawae declined to answer the question, while Moss responded, "If I had the answer I would give it to you clearer, but I don't have it."

"I think we will get back to that," Pennington said, "we will get back to it and mix it up and do what we need to do to win. We know we have to score points. We can't just try to win games 13-10."

Football: Coaches support decision

FOOTBALL, FROM BACK PAGE

If not, then Edgren will play for the small-schools title as the lone Japan representative.

Perry principal Alice Berard says "there is interest" in reviving the program, adding there's already been one meeting of the school, students and parents and more are scheduled.

"We'll know by the end of January," she said. "It's a matter of whether interest turns into action."

Hobbs acknowledged there might be inequities that had to be worked out.

The most glaring one, Pujol pointed out, is that only one of Japan's three teams and one of Okinawa's two teams will qualify for the large-school playoffs, while Seoul American and Guam High get a free pass.

"It's difficult to take all those factors and come up with a system that's totally equitable," Hobbs said. "But we've come up with a playoff system that's doable. We have a system that's fair to all parties for the time being."

Perhaps standing to benefit most from the

"It will be especially great to see the Panthers and Dragons of Okinawa come back to life."

Sergio Mendoza
Kadena coach

new system are Okinawa's Kadena and Kubasaki High Schools.

Under the new format, Kadena and Kubasaki will cobble together the best players from each of their split squads into Panthers and Dragons varsity teams, which will then play a best-of-three series for the right to qualify for the large-school semifinals.

"It will be especially great to see the Panthers and Dragons of Okinawa come back to life," Mendoza said. "This is really exciting. It's great to start preparations and know where we're headed."

Hobbs suggested that Seoul American might do the same thing in the Korea regular season, starting with two split squads and

forming one varsity team later in the season for playoff purposes.

Otherwise, regular seasons should remain the same in Japan, where Zama, Edgren, Yokota, Perry and Kinick play a double round-robin slate, and on Guam, where Guam High will continue in its regular league. Unless things change in Korea, Seoul, Osan and Taegu will play each other twice.

Even if tiny Osan and Taegu can't compete with Seoul, at least Korea's smaller programs know they have something to play for, said Osan American coach Tony Alvarado.

"Our goal is still to beat Seoul and be the best team in Korea," Alvarado said. "But this [playoff] puts us on a level playing field."

Having a rainbow to chase at the end of regular season in any sport "does make a difference in our other programs," Berard said. "Even if they get beat by bigger schools week to week, they know they have a chance to be competitive when they go to Far East."

Even with Okinawa's schools beefing up with their varsity teams instead of split squads, Pujol said simply: "Bring it on."

"I relish the change," Pujol said. "This coming fall is going to be one to remember." E-mail Dave Ormser at: orms@starpipes.com

Local scoreboard

Boys basketball

Tuesday
Yokohama-Kawasaki 77, Zama Amer. 62
At Camp Zama, Japan
Yokohama 16, Zama 14
Leading scorers: Zama, Will Badillo 23, Miguel Vilpa 20.

Wednesday
Seoul American 68, Taigon Christian 15
At Taigon, South Korea

Leading scorers: Seoul, Mike Goodfay 21, Jay Higgins 12, Jeremy Christopher 11, TCS, Roy Kwon 5. Leading rebounders: Seoul, Jay Higgins 10, Assistants: Jay Higgins 6, Jaihal Mott 6, Jeremy Christopher 5.
Noteworthy: Seoul's starters played just 2 1/2 quarters. Falcons recorded season-high 17 assists as a team.

Girls basketball

Wednesday
Osan American 34, Seoul Foreign 34
At Osan Air Base, South Korea

Leading scorers: Osan, Margaret Nurse 16, Elizabeth Jennings 13, Jessica Guertin 8, Sharon Keffring, A-Leading scorers: Osan, Margaret Nurse 13, Sheila Osan, Sharon Keffring 6, Jessica Guertin 6, Deshri Harris 6.

Taegu American 46, Pusan American 38
At Camp Hialeah, South Korea

Leading scorers: Taegu, Brandi Wagner 14, Keith Cox 10, Pusan, Belmaria Carroll 20. Leading rebounders: Taegu, Tasha Brown 18, Keith Cox 17, Lynette Grant 8, Assistants: Taegu, Brandi Wagner 4, Ashley Good 4.

Lineman's N.D. snub leaves Irish fighting mad

By DOUG TUCKER
The Associated Press

KANSAS CITY, Mo. — All he said was, "Jordan Black, Dallas Christian High School." That was more than enough to upset many Notre Dame football fans.

The Kansas City offensive tackle admits he's miffed at his alma mater for firing coach Tyrone Willingham, but insisted he was only seeking to promote his Mesquite, Texas, high school during TV introductions Monday night.

The calls came in quickly. "As crazy as some of the comments have been, I think I've probably burned a lot of bridges," said Black, who started 42 games for the Fighting Irish. "Notre Dame thinks I'm the devil."

Black, a fifth-round draft pick in 2003, made his first NFL start at right tackle in the Chiefs' 49-38 victory over Tennessee.

He said before the game he would probably identify himself by his high school, which is on a fund-raising drive. But he also made it clear he did not like the way Notre Dame handled its coaching situation.

"It doesn't seem like they did their homework or had a plan," Black said Wednesday.

Willingham, fired with three years left on his contract, was 21-15 in three seasons at the school — the shortest tenure for a non-interim Notre Dame coach in 70 years.

Utah coach Urban Meyer, believed to be Notre Dame's top pick to replace Willingham, instead took the Florida job. Notre Dame has since hired New England offensive coordinator Charlie Weiss.

"I love Notre Dame and I'm grateful for what they did for me," Black said. "But I wasn't too impressed with the way they went about their coaching search."

Now only \$99 to order*

ACT FAST!

Exchange New Car Sales brings you The Early-Order Advantage

The SOONER you place your order on selected Chrysler 2005 models, the BIGGER your rebate.

	Chrysler 300C	Dodge Magnum	Dodge Dakota	Jeep Grand Cherokee
2005 CHRYSLER REBATE CHART				
MODEL	11/12 - 12/03/04	12/04 - 12/25/04	12/26 - 01/09/05	
Chrysler 300C	\$2,005	\$1,750	\$1,500	
Dodge Magnum	\$2,005	\$1,750	\$1,500	
Dodge Dakota	\$2,005	\$1,850	\$1,700	
Jeep Grand Cherokee	\$2,005	\$1,850	\$1,700	

These Exchange New Car Sales rebates are a Military Advantage Program EXCLUSIVE!

Combined with
**LOW INTRODUCTORY
FACTORY PRICING...**

NOW IS THE TIME TO BUY!

Visit your on-base Exchange New Car Sales location, www.ency.com or e-mail us at exch@militarycars.com



*The order deposit must be upgraded to no less than \$300 or other current deposit requirement, the earlier of 250% or 75 days from the customer's requested delivery date. All illustrations and specifications are to the best of our knowledge correct as of the date of publication. They are subject to change made by the manufacturer and the laws or regulations of any federal, state or local government agency. Sales shown are for illustrative only, and may contain options not available on all programs and quantities are subject to terms and conditions. See your sales representative for details. Selling Chrysler Corporation, Ford and General Motors are authorized contractors of AAPEX and RECON. Exchange New Car Sales is an authorized distributor to sell and distribute Chrysler, Ford, General Motors, Honda and Isuzu/Infiniti vehicles. This advertisement does not represent an offer by AAPEX, RECON, the DOD components, or the Federal Government and is not sponsored by them. © 2004

Wake looks ordinary in struggling past Elon

The Associated Press

WINSTON-SALEM, N.C. — Wake Forest coach Skip Prosser didn't want to talk about his team.

Who could blame him? Perhaps caught looking ahead to No. 14 Texas, the sixth-ranked Demon Deacons were down on Wednesday night. And whether starting forward Ytanas Danielus plays over the Longhorns is anyone's guess.

Prosser sent Danielus to the locker room with 16 minutes left in the 85-67 victory over the Phoenix. Prosser wouldn't discuss what happened, and Danielus said he didn't know.

"It was Coach's decision," he said. "I didn't conduct myself as a Wake Forest basketball player."

Chris Paul had 14 points and 11 assists and Kyle Vissler added 13 points for the Deacons.

"Rather than talk about what we didn't do, Elon deserves credit," Prosser said. "I thought the Elon kids played really, really hard. I thought they took it to us the whole game."

Asked Danielus' status against the Longhorns on Saturday, Prosser said he didn't know.

As if that wasn't bad enough for Wake Forest, forwards Eric Williams and Jamaal Levy left the game with injuries, although neither appeared to be serious. Williams sprained his ankle and said he expects to play against the Longhorns.

Levy came down hard on his left arm while committing a charge to foul out.

"I don't feel bad," Paul said. "A win's a win."

The Demon Deacons (8-1) struggled to put away Temple on Monday night and also played sloppily against Elon, trailing about 4 minutes into the second half. Justin Gray made a three-pointer, Trent Strickland followed with two free throws and the defensively challenged Demon Deacons showed some bite.

Elon (2-7) ended five of its next six possessions with a turnover, and the other featured a badly missed three-pointer by Montell Williams. Twice, Wake Forest's press forced traveling violations before the ball reached midcourt.

Still, Elon hung in, getting within eight points on a layup by Chris Chalko with about 8 minutes left. The Deacons finally sealed it with seven straight points, including a basket by Vissler off Paul's 11th assist.

Paul, a sophomore, also had six steals.

Chalko had 16 points and Scottie Rice added 15 for Elon, which had seven of eight.

"There is no such thing as a moral victory," Elon coach Ernie Nestor said. "The best thing you



Wake Forest's Chris Paul (3) drives past Elon's Scottie Rice (11) for a basket during the second half of No. 6 Wake Forest's 85-67 victory Wednesday night.

do in a season cannot be a loss, you must win games. But we're not going away from tonight feeling that this was a total wasted effort."

Wake Forest continually pounded the ball inside and outscored Elon 48-22 in the paint, with Vissler leading the way. The 6-foot-11 center nearly matched his season- and career-high of 15 points that he had earlier this season against Yale, the only previous time he scored in double figures. "When he plays like he's 6-11, he's a very positive asset for us," Prosser said.

No. 3 Georgia Tech 72, James Madison 47: At Atlanta, Isma'il Muhammad scored 14 points and Jarrett Jack added 13 to lead the Yellow Jackets (7-0), who struggled offensively but had another strong defensive effort. Leading scorer B.J. Elder, averaging 18.7 points, managed only four on 4-for-7 shooting in 25 minutes and Will Bynum had 10 on 2-for-9 shooting in 28 minutes. Georgia Tech entered the game allowing 51 points per game, fourth best in the country.

Ray Barbosa had 15 points for the Dukes (2-4), who lost their fourth straight.

No. 12 N.C. State 78, La-Lafayette 72: At Raleigh, N.C., Andrew Brackman scored 20 points and Julius Hodge 16 for the Wolfpack (8-0), who have their best record since going 9-0 in 1981-82.

Tiras Wade scored 37 points and hit five three-pointers to lead the Ragin' Cajuns (3-5).

Wade hit two free throws and then made a contested, double-pump three-pointer to pull Louisiana-Lafayette to 74-72 with 6.9 seconds to go. But Cameron Bennerman made two free throws to put the game away.

No. 14 Texas 85, Texas-Arlington 70: At Austin, Texas, P.J. Tucker had 17 points and 10 rebounds for the Longhorns (7-1), who won for the 34th time in their last 35 home games. Texas shot 56 percent in taking a 52-29 half-time lead.

Jarrett Howell scored 24 points for the Mavericks (4-3).

One Miss picks an SC man

Orgeron, USC's defensive line coach, takes top job; Croom's contract extended; Wannstedt out at Pitt

The Associated Press

OXFORD, Miss. — Ed Orgeron's recruiting success at Southern California helped him land the job as Mississippi's football coach.

"We are going to teach our young men

to compete," Orgeron said during a news conference on Thursday.

"We're going to compete from the time we get up in the morning until the time we go to bed," Orgeron said. The Rebels hope the 43-year-old Louisiana native can use his ties to the Deep South to lure talented recruits to Oxford and reinstate the Ole Miss program with the tough, punishing defense that became a Southern Cal staple.

Orgeron was USC's defensive line coach, an assistant head coach for two years and the closest thing the school had to a defensive coordinator; head coach Pete Carroll is in charge of the Trojans' defense.

Orgeron also was USC's recruiting coordinator for four years.

"This is the beginning of the Orgeron era at Ole Miss, and it's going to be a successful one," chancellor Robert Khayat said.

Orgeron's hiring capped the Rebels' two-week search for a replacement for David Cutcliffe, who was fired Dec. 1 after a 4-7 record, his first losing season in six seasons at Ole Miss.

Ohio U. goes with Solich

ATHENS, Ohio — Former Nebraska coach Frank Solich was hired Thursday as football coach at Ohio University, returning to the state where he grew up and promising to rebuild a program that won only 11 games over the



Ed Orgeron comments during a news conference Thursday. Orgeron, a USC assistant, was hired as football coach at Mississippi.

past four years.

Solich was fired after three seasons at Nebraska, despite playing for the 2001 national title and going 9-3 in 2003. He was doomed trying to keep pace with Tom Osborne, whose last four teams were 49-2 and won or shared three national titles.

The year after Solich was fired, Nebraska was 5-6 and failed for the first time in 35 years to qualify for a bowl.

Croom's contract extended

STARKVILLE, Miss. — Sylvester Croom, the first black head football coach in Southeastern Conference history, agreed to a one-year contract extension through 2008, the school announced Wednesday.

Croom signed a four-year deal when he was hired last December. The Bulldogs finished 3-8 this season, 2-6 in the SEC. An upset of then-nationally ranked Florida was the high point of Croom's first season.

A year ago, Croom inherited a program in the midst of an NCAA investigation for recruiting violations between 1998 and 2002.

The NCAA placed Mississippi State on probation for four years, stripped it of eight scholarships over two years and banned the team from bowls this season.

Fason to enter draft

GAINESSVILLE, Fla. — Florida running back Clatrick Fason, who ran for 1,173 yards and 10 touchdowns as a junior this season, said he'll enter the NFL Draft.

Williamson turning pro

COLUMBIA, S.C. — South Carolina receiver Troy Williamson, who caught 43 passes for a Southeastern Conference-best 835 yards this season, will skip his senior season to enter the NFL Draft.

Wannstedt no longer candidate for Pitt job

PITTSBURGH — Former Miami Dolphins and Chicago Bears coach Dave Wannstedt decided Thursday not to seek the coaching job at Pitt, the school where he played and once was an assistant coach.

Wannstedt, who resigned as the Dolphins' coach Nov. 9 after Miami's 1-11 start in the season games, was believed to be the front-runner to succeed Walt Harris at Pitt. But Wannstedt said Pittsburgh athletic director Jeff Long on Thursday morning and pulled his name out of consideration.

Ex-players question Zook hiring

The Associated Press

CHAMPAIGN, Ill. — Former Illinois football players are questioning whether the school searched hard enough for a black or minority coach to replace Ron Turner before hiring recently fired Florida coach Ron Zook.

The 62 former players wrote a letter to athletic director Ron Gueither on Nov. 22, the day Turner was fired, asking him to "enact a search process that includes several African-American coaches and other coaches of color." They attached a list of candidates.

Copies of the letter were sent to interim Chancellor Richard Herman and members of the university's board of trustees.

"We wanted to make sure there was a system in place for fairness in opportunity for the head coaching job at the University of Illinois," Eric Rouse, a starting wide receiver in the late

1970s, told The (Champaign) News-Gazette. "We didn't want the South Carolina situation where Les Holtz says, 'I retire. Here's Steve Spurrier, head coach.' That's not fair."

The former players say they aren't upset that Gueither hired Zook, but they aren't happy about the perception that Zook's hiring was a done deal before the application deadline for candidates.

Zook's hiring was announced less than 24 hours after that Dec. 6 deadline.

"That's what got our ire up," Rouse said.

Former Illini running back Howard Griffith said he believes Gueither hired the person he thought would be best for the job. But Griffith said he also believes the hiring process was not as open as it should have been.

"We know the offer didn't come until one minute after 5 o'clock," Griffith said. "But you

know a hand was shaken probably Tuesday or Wednesday. That's what reasonable people would think."

"We know he (Gueither) interviewed Leslie (Frazier) and Kirby Wilson at the end of the process. We would be safe in assuming a handshake deal was done before that. You would figure," he told the newspaper.

Frazier, who was hired by the Cincinnati Bengals and Wilson is running backs coach for the Arizona Cardinals. Both are black.

Gueither was out of the office Wednesday afternoon and did not immediately return a call for comment from The Associated Press.

Herman, the interim chancellor, approved Zook's hiring, as did the school's executive employment opportunity committee.

"I know who was in the final five. There was clear representation of black coaches and we went up with the best person," Herman told the AP Wednesday.

Nationals' deal nearing collapse

By JOSEPH WHITE
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Baseball's response to Washington's lawmakers was strong, swift and ominous. Or, as Mayor Anthony A. Williams put it: "The dream of 33 years is now once again close to dying."

On Wednesday, Major League Baseball shut down business and promotional operations indefinitely for the team that has been researching baseball's future essentially gave the city 15 days to change its mind about a new financing plan, or else the search could begin anew for a permanent home for the troubled franchise.

At issue is a measure passed late Tuesday by the District of Columbia Council, which voted to approve the Expos' move to Washington if private financing is used for at least half the cost of building a stadium. Baseball has been adamant that a stadium be funded with 100 percent government money up front, as stipulated in a September agreement negotiated with Williams.

"The legislation is inconsistent with our carefully negotiated agreement and is wholly unacceptable to Major League Baseball," said Bob DuPuy, baseball's chief operating officer.

Season-ticket sales were immediately halted, and the 16,000 fans who have made \$300 deposits can ask for a refund. The stadium, which would cost more than \$100 million in caps and other merchandise over 3½ weeks, was shut indefinitely at the close of business Wednesday. The unvel-

ing of uniforms with the team's new name, the Washington Nationals, was postponed. A hiring freeze was implemented.

Only the baseball side of the operation will continue to function as usual, although the sudden drop in revenue will hamper general manager Jim Bowden's ability to sign players.

"Don't expect us to spend a lot of money at this point," team president Tony Tavaras said. "We will continue to try to make the team competitive, but I don't expect to us to be a big buyer."

Washington has until Dec. 31 to work out an arrangement acceptable to baseball. That's when the agreement with the city expires, allowing baseball to reopen the process of selecting a permanent host city. The Council could reconsider its vote in light of baseball's reaction, debating again the issue of how much tax money should not be used to fund a sports facility in a city in dire need of better schools and other public services.

Whatever the possible compromises, the days are running short.

"We'll use them all, every minute of every hour of every day, and all of us move to the middle," Williams spokesman Chris Bender said. "It's ninth inning, second out, we have to make it happen."

DuPuy did not address where the team

would play its 2005 home schedule if the deal with Washington falls through. It remains unclear whether baseball would move the franchise to Washington's RFK Stadium on a temporary basis, remain at Montreal's Olympic Stadium or go to another city.

The developments were stunning to fans who have been waiting for baseball since the Washington Senators moved to Texas following the 1971 season.

"It's like you're in a 100-yard dash, and you're one yard away from the finish line," said Charlie Brotman,

longtime Senators public address announcer and a prominent advocate for baseball's return. "You're beating everybody, and all of a sudden you've got a cramp, and you lose. It's raining on our parade."

Council Chair Linda W. Cropp proposed the private financing amendment, which was approved 10-3 after she threatened to withhold support from the overall package, which then passed in a 7-6 vote.

"I am not trying to kill the deal," Cropp said. "I'm putting some teeth in it because I'm really disappointed with what I got from Major League Baseball."

The September agreement estimated the cost of building the ballpark and refurbishing RFK Stadium at \$435 million, but critics claimed it would cost far more. The pro-

posal, as initially approved by the council on Nov. 30, called for Washington to issue up to \$531 million in bonds to cover the cost.

"We had a deal. I believe the deal was broken, and the dream of 33 years is now once again close to dying. I would say so," Williams said.

Meanwhile, some of the communities that had lost out in the bidding for the team prepared to resume their efforts to lure the franchise.

"If the opportunity arises for the Expos again, we are going to be standing there along with everyone else," said Will Somerville Jr., head of a Norfolk, Va., baseball group.

Las Vegas Mayor Oscar Goodman went to baseball's winter meetings last weekend trying to attract attention to his efforts to lure a team. But he could not offer a firm stadium plan.

"It's just a glint in my eye, at this point," he said.

Washington has lost teams twice before: The original Senators became the Minnesota Twins after the 1960 season and the expansion Senators moved to Texas 11 years later.

"Here we are back where we were five years ago — the nation's capital, the center of the world, a city of possibility, aspiration and ambition and opportunity, and a city that cannot do what it says it's going to do," Williams said. "I'm saddened that we can go so far in five years and step back so far in five minutes."

Braves trade for Hudson; Beltre, M's OK big deal

The Associated Press

OAKLAND, Calif. — Tim Hudson was traded from the Oakland Athletics to Atlanta on Thursday in a deal that further bolstered the Braves' revamped rotation.

With Los Angeles, Boston and the New York Yankees rumored to be pursuing Hudson, the Braves swooped in and got the Oakland ace for outfielder Charles Thomas and pitchers Juan Cruz and Dan Meyer.

It was Atlanta's second big trade in a week. Last Saturday, the Braves acquired closer Dan Kolb from Milwaukee, a move that allowed them to

move John Smoltz back into the rotation.

"One of our goals going into the offseason was to strengthen our pitching staff," Braves General Manager John Schuerholz said.

"We have certainly made a major improvement."

Moments after the Hudson trade was announced, the Braves sent outfielder Eli Marrero and cash to Kansas City for pitcher Jorge Vazquez, who was 4-5 with 18 saves last season for Wichita of the Texas League.

Hudson and Vazquez join a team that has won 13 straight division titles.

The 29-year-old Hudson posted 81 wins from 2000-04, tied for the most in the AL over that span. He is 12-39 with a 3.30 ERA lifetime.

Hudson was signed with a 3.53 ERA in 27 saves this season. He made the All-Star team for the second time, but did not pitch because of a strained left side that put him on the disabled list for a month.

Beltre, Mariners agree on a contract

NEW YORK — Prized free agent Adrian Beltre and the Seattle Mariners agreed to a \$6 million, five-year deal on Thursday, The Associated Press learned.



Adrian Beltre



Tim Hudson

Beltre's contract is contingent on him passing a physical, a person close to the third baseman said, speaking on condition of anonymity. The deal could be announced as early as Friday.

A day earlier, the Mariners added another slugger by finalizing a \$50 million, four-year contract with free-agent first baseman Richie Sexson.

Pirates obtain veteran C Santiago

PITTSBURGH — Benito Santiago was traded Thursday by the Kansas City Royals to the Pittsburgh Pirates, who have sought a veteran catcher since dealing Jason Kendall to Oakland last month.

The Royals get right-handed prospect Leo Nunez for Santiago, but also must pay about \$1 million of Santiago's \$2.15 million salary in the second season of his two-year contract.

Santiago, a five-time All-Star and three-time Gold Glove winner, hit .274 with six homers and 23 RBIs in 49 games

in 2004, but didn't play after fracturing his left hand June 18 in Philadelphia.

Pedro Martinez is now a Met

NEW YORK — After helping the Boston Red Sox win their first title in 86 years, Pedro Martinez will try to lead the New York Mets to their first championship since 1986.

Martinez was introduced at Shea Stadium on Thursday, a day after he passed his physical and the Mets finalized his \$53 million, four-year contract.

"It was more of a commitment from this team than it was money, actually," Martinez said. "I gave Boston every opportunity to actually get me."

Martinez turned down a \$40.5 million, three-year offer from the Red Sox and told his agent to work out a deal with New York.

"Boston wouldn't pull the trigger," he said. "Why did they have to wait until the last minute or so?"

Martinez, a 33-year-old right-hander, has had shoulder problems at times but he passed the physical conducted Wednesday in New York.

Martinez went 16-9 with a career-high 3.90 ERA last season, when the Red Sox won their first World Series title since 1918, and was 117-37 in seven years with Boston.

White Sox, IF Uribe reach deal

CHICAGO — The Chicago White Sox agreed to a \$9.75 million, three-year deal with infielder Juan Uribe on Thursday, avoiding arbitration.

Uribe hit .283 and set career highs with 23 home runs and 74 RBIs last season, his first with the White Sox after being acquired from Colorado. He hit .355 with seven homers and 26 RBIs over the final 32 games.

Uribe also gave the White Sox some versatility in the infield, playing 77 games at second base, 38 at short and 27 at third.

Uribe will make \$2.15 million next season, \$3.15 million in 2006 and \$4.15 million in 2007. The club has an \$8 million option for 2008 with a \$300,000 buyout.

Uribe is a career .266 hitter with 47 home runs and 209 RBIs in four years with the Colorado Rockies and White Sox.

Smoltz gets two more years in Atlanta

ATLANTA — In a deal motivated by his recent return to Atlanta's starting rotation, John Smoltz agreed Thursday to a new two-year contract that increases the chance he will complete his career with the Braves.

Smoltz, 37, would have been eligible to become a free agent following the 2005 season. He has 154 saves the last four seasons but will have his wish granted to return to the starting rotation following the team's return for closer Danny

Smoltz has a career record of 163-121. He won the National League Cy Young Award in 1996.

Baseball
roundup

SPORTS



Dickau has career-best night to lead Hornets over Warriors, Page 38

DODDS alters football field

Playoffs to determine Far East champs in two divisions

By DAVE ORNAUER

Stars and Stripes

TORII STATION, Okinawa — Starting next fall, Department of Defense Dependents Schools-Pacific will hold playoffs to crown football champions, DODDS officials announced Thursday.

The format was set in a meeting this week of DODDS-Pacific district superintendents, according to DODDS-Pacific Far East Activities Council chair Don Hobbs.

"We have Far East championships in other sports, and we wanted a football playoff," Hobbs said.

Schools will be divided based on enrollment — the line being drawn at 360 — into large schools and small schools, just like in other sports.

One DODDS team each from Japan,

Korea, Guam and Okinawa will play in the large-school division semifinals.

Seven teams comprise the large-school division: Yokota, Zama American and Nile C. Kinnick in Japan, and Kubasaki and Kadena of Okinawa. Seoul American and Guam High, the only DOD schools in their respective areas, qualify automatically for the semifinals.

Next year, Guam will host Okinawa's champion in one semifinal, and Seoul American will host the JFTI champ, with the winners meeting at the site of the Okinawa-Guam semifinal winner. The semi-

"We have Far East championships in other sports, and we wanted a football playoff."

Don Hobbs
FEAC chair

the small-school pool.

"This was built on the Rising Sun Bowl" which, since 1999, has pitted the Japan Football League and Okinawa Activities Council champions. "And with the addition of DODDS football in Korea and of Guam

and championship sites will rotate," Hobbs said.

The small-schools format pits the teams with the best regular-season records in Japan and Korea in the championship.

Osan American and Taegu American in Korea and Robert D. Edgren and Matthew C. Perry of Japan comprise

High," Hobbs said, "we wanted a Pacific-wide playoff."

The news was met with a unanimous chorus of approval from coaches.

"I think it's fantastic," said Yokota coach Tim Pujol. "I applaud the decision to include everybody. For the first time, you get a fair comparison of everybody. If it's worth it to fly 14 teams to Okinawa for a Far East tournament, then it's certainly worth two weeks of playoffs. It's progress."

"It will be a great opportunity for a showcase of great football throughout the Pacific," said Sergio Mendoza of Okinawa's Kadena Islanders.

The small-school lineup is contingent, Hobbs said, on whether Perry, whose program folded last year due to lack of players, can field a team in 2005.

SEE FOOTBALL ON PAGE 36

D.C. baseball backers up in arms



Washington, D.C. Mayor Anthony A. Williams tells reporters Wednesday that the future of the Nationals is in jeopardy. The District of Columbia Council voted 7-6 Tuesday to approve legislation that forces private finances to account for half of the cost to build a ballpark in the city. Major League Baseball Chief Operating Officer Bob DuPuy said, "The legislation is inconsistent with our carefully negotiated agreement and is wholly unacceptable." Baseball has given the city a deadline of Dec. 31 to reach a more a suitable financing arrangement. See Page 39 for story.



Ole Miss picks Southern Cal assistant as its new coach

Page 37



Kitna back in charge of Bengals' offense

Page 35

Beltre headed to Seattle; Hudson dealt to Braves Page 39

